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# **A. T. ARIYARATNE COLLECTED WORKS**

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**VOLUME III**

**EDITED BY  
NANDASENA RATNAPALA**





COLLECTED WORKS  
VOLUME III



**A. T. ARIYARATNE**

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# **COLLECTED WORKS**

## **VOLUME III**

*Edited by*  
***Nandasena Ratnapala***

*Afterward by*  
***David Kalupahana***

  
**VISHVA LEKHA**  
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A. T. Ariyaratne

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## PREFACE

It is a great privilege and an honour to be fortunate enough to get the opportunity of editing Volume III of the Collected Works of Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, Leader of the Sri Lanka Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and I am indeed very thankful to Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala for giving me that opportunity. It is no secret that the first two volumes of this series were of such a high standard that they became popular reading in seats of higher learning and similar institutions all over the world and they gave the guidelines for the formation and development of similar Movements in many countries.

The present Volume which is the third in the series contains the text of ten lectures delivered at international forums abroad, three in Sri Lanka, two Convocation Addresses (one abroad and one in Sri Lanka), the speech delivered in Brussels on receiving the King Baudouin Award for International Development and the two very important and historic documents - "People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony" and "Peace Walk to evoke Humanity". These illustrate the statement of Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala who kindly wrote the Introduction; "Since then the experiences have outgrown parochial limits: it has reached the universal dimensions".

It is difficult for me to resist the temptation of stating here a few words from my personal experience. Having spent thirty three years of my life in the service of the Government, of which twenty three were at executive level in the District Administration which implemented Government programmes of Rural Development under the guidance of political leaders and bureaucrats, and thereafter having joined the Sri Lanka Sarvodaya Movement during the last three years of my retirement, I have seen at first hand the great difference between the two approaches to Rural Development. Under Government the policies and approaches to Rural Development not only changed with the changes of Government but the techniques

employed were impersonal and bereft of human feeling and were hamstrung by bureaucratic rules and regulations and often vitiated by party politics.

The Sarvodaya approach was totally different. The worker here was a 'real' human being with a heart and feeling for the helpless rural villager, and the Leader, Dr. Ariyaratne, was there in person at critical moments, even in the most remote place in the island, to give a helping hand and inspiration to everyone. Unfortunately, space does not permit me to elaborate on this aspect and point out the superiority of the Sarvodaya approach to rural development.

A special word of thanks is due to Hans van Ispelen, Susiri de Silva, Dirk Joost Piek and the staff of Vishva Lekha, the most modern and up-to date printing press set up by Sarvodaya at Ratmalana, the staff of Sarvodaya Headquarters, Moratuwa, and the S.R.I and Mr. E.H.S. Fernando, Office Administrator.

Last but not the least our sincere thanks go to Prof. David Kalupahana for writing an Afterword.

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## INTRODUCTION

I am happy that I had the privilege of editing the Vol.I and Vol. II of the Collected Works of Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne. They contained Ari's earliest writings, the seminal seeds of his philosophy which later blossomed forth into the beautiful and practical philosophy of Sarvodaya. Much of those writings included in those Volumes are not now easy to lay hands on. I am happy that the two Volumes were read, digested and even put into practice by those who appreciated his philosophy not only in Sri Lanka but also in other parts of the world. Even his bitterest critics, perforce, read the two Volumes because it is only in reading them, they could carve out desirable opportunities to attack him.

Sarvodaya Movement was born officially in 1958. Today it is about 27 years of age. Ari is about twice that age but if one looks at his life, including the period before Sarvodaya was born, Sarvodaya philosophy and programme of work even though it is not named so, were in existence from the time he was a child. Much of what Sarvodaya has done or accomplished is never recorded. One third of what Ari has accomplished in his life is not known to even his closest compatriots. Unfortunately Ari is a man who believes in not allowing his right hand to know what the left hand does. He had initiated programmes to help individuals as well as collectives. He would not let the fact to be known by others. This vast area of activity like the hidden mass of the iceberg is not visible to us. Yet while looking on at what we observe, what is recorded here and there, one is constrained to ask can all this massive work happen within this small space of time? - a span of nearly three decades? Could all this be, what is achieved by one little man whose physical stature makes him almost a diminutive even among group of average countrymen.

They say that the great Buddha had two dimensions in his life. First there was the physical dimension. The Buddha was like any other human being, endowed with normal human

features. Then there was the spiritual dimension. In this the Buddha was considered immeasurable. This meant that the Buddha's spiritual development was infinite, cannot be measured by our known conventional quantified terms.

I believe in the case of lesser human beings too these two terms of measurement come in handy. As I have already stated, physically Ariyaratne is a small man. Yet he has a spiritual dimension which is twice or thrice those of others. It is this spiritual dimension that thrust his inner self to indefatigable work, making him accomplish acts that seem beyond the average human ability or capacity. It is this inner spiritual development in him that had enabled him to achieve so much in so short a time.

Ariyaratne is a man whose best or whose real essence or the exact mettle he is made of, is seen when he is confronted with problems. I would further clarify this by saying the best in him is seen when he is "hit most". He is 'hit most' when the Sarvodaya Movement by one reason or another is falling into serious trouble. Recently I saw him in such a mood when the ethnic problem between the Sinhalese and Tamils violently erupted like a volcano. In 1983 when the flame of communal tension was set ablaze it was the voice of Ari we heard as the earliest voice of sanity. He ventured forth bravely into the burning cauldron of ethnic fire with the sole desire and determination of saving human lives without any regard as to one's race, creed or caste.

I remember how he and Sarvodaya was dangerously threatened then. Some even went to the extent of threatening not only him but also the Movement deriving a diabolical pleasure from it. But it is the great inner spirit in him that ignited that intense commitment, and dedication to a task of instilling compassion and understanding into hearts which were full of misunderstanding, ill-will and hatred. Ari was like a fire-fighter with his Sarvodaya brigade behind him attempting to douse a national fire of sizeable proportions. He did not confine his attention to philosophical messages only but backed it up with an active practical programme.

Long before 1983 whenever fractional or sectarian hatred raised its head like an ugly monster, Sarvodaya and Ari

followed up the disaster with their spiritual fire brigade. On one hand the victim, regardless of whoever it is, was helped and assisted. Sarvodaya held his hand and lifted him up injecting courage and hope into his downward and forlorn spirits. The aggressor whoever it might be, was made to understand the ugly meaning of what he had done and an attempt was made to change his heart. It happened on all occasions when one human being attacked another by reason of differences in caste, creed or race.

One need not take this opportunity to recount Sarvodaya's activities in this field in detail within the last three decades. But suffice to say that in 1977 when the minority Tamil groups were attacked by a group of hooligans and misguided elements in the Sabaragamuwa province, it was Sarvodaya that bravely came to the rescue of the minority group. In 1983 all over the island at Sarvodaya Centres and villages, Sarvodians carried out their task of compassion, deeply moved by their belief in the oneness of man. In the Jaffna Peninsula even today it is the torch of Sarvodaya that burns still as the only light of compassion, understanding and happiness. Sarvodaya walks between the youth who have taken to violence and the Government forces helping those in need. It is not the light of a particular ethnic group or a religion: it is the spiritual light of all mankind- a light that - concentrates oneness of man forgetting all other man-made differences. It is the light of succour, understanding, goodwill and compassion. In 1984 - 85 when the members of the majority community were attacked, it was again Sarvodaya that came to their assistance.

"Although some may say that S.S.M. has still to make some sort of headway in Jaffna which it has made in all other parts of Sri Lanka, it must be said that in Jaffna and other Tamil-speaking areas there are over a thousand villages where Sarvodaya is working and a headway has already been made....." It was Prof. Das Gupta's considered view having had extensive discussions with Tamils in the North that "Tamils did not think that S.S.M. was not their Movement".

I am happy that in this Volume the editor has included the "People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony" adopted on the conclusion of the General Conference held on

1st and 2nd of October 1983. This historical document shows the depth of feeling that Sarvodaya had towards all Sri Lankans and Sri Lanka in this time of national disaster. The original document was drafted by Ari and I believe the feelings embodied in it came from the deepest point in his large heart. For him there is nothing so noble as man and it is noble qualities in man that he had attempted to salvage to find a solution to a problem arising out of human madness.

It is a sad commentary to view the attack on Sarvodaya by some misguided critics calling it an organisation mainly intended for Sinhala Buddhists. In a country where Buddhism was the dominant religion for over 2500 years and where 72% are Sinhalese, it is quite natural that the majority of Sarvodians come from Sinhala Buddhist background. How can I blame myself for being born in a Sinhala Buddhist family? Ari has asked this question, posing it to all of us in apparent anguish at such ill-conceived remarks. No ordinary man can pre-decide race, caste, colour or place of his birth. To blame Sarvodaya for nurturing itself on Buddhism is like blaming a tree for acquiring nourishment from its immediate surroundings. Buddhism sees no distinction between man and man; it does not look at man from the point of view of caste, race, creed or colour. If Sarvodaya has thus followed Buddhism, Sarvodaya had been true to its basic philosophy.

From 1958 Sarvodaya had all ethnic groups and religious groups working with it. In the early work Camps at Kanatholuwa, Manawa, Panchichenkerney etc. Sinhalese, Tamils, Burghers and Moors worked like brothers and sisters. Historically Sarvodaya was born in a Sinhalese dominated area but it was not confined to one religion, one class, one race or one group. It was the common heritage of all human beings transcending even the territorial boundaries of one country. Ari's philosophy and plan of action belong to all mankind.

Those critics who accuse Ari and Sarvodaya of not contributing to communal harmony in a positive manner should take some time to look at Sarvodaya activities before such rash statements are made. They should go through the list of schools, names of school boys, place and details of participants, work accomplished in at least documented

Sarvodaya Camps. As early as 1960 Sarvodaya initiated a programme for youth in the North to come to the South settling down in Sinhala homes for some time and an equal number of youth in the South to go to the North to settle down in Tamil homesteads. This way they were to share each other's culture, life and experience, understanding one another as human beings. The Programme is continued until this day gradually contributing to the building of a foundation for human beings to understand and love one another.

The critics have also levelled their guns at the so-called friendship between the present Government and Sarvodaya. Dr Ariyaratne has again and again stated that Sarvodaya has no truck with any political party. "We are no enemies of any political party. We do not prefer one to the other". When a Government is chosen by the people and when that Government initiates programmes which are beneficial to the people, if our help and assistance is asked, we give it to the people. At the same time when a Government attempts to legislate against the welfare of the people we will oppose it.

This had been Sarvodaya's stance in the past and in the present and it will be this also for the future. Sarvodaya's enemies look at national or religious occasions when Ari is often photographed with political leaders. They forget the context of the occasion or diabolically suppress it, gladly giving utterances to the fact "look here, the Sarvodaya Leader is with political leaders." It is a pity that they do not see how Ari and Sarvodaya have voiced their disapproval of other measures of the Government which Sarvodaya considers as inimical to people's welfare.

A discerning critic has only to see how individuals of various political colour flock to Sarvodaya Headquarters. These individuals may be from the extreme left or the extreme right. Sarvodaya welcomes the human being in them and not the political colour. Their greatness of heart is appreciated by Sarvodaya and if they ask or request Sarvodaya for any help or assistance in this greatness of heart, Sarvodaya readily obliges. The political hue is just a matter of an apparel: does not matter to Sarvodaya just an apparel or an ornament one wears.

Sarvodaya criticises the Governments or any one else when a

measure initiated by the Government or any one else is deemed by Sarvodaya as detrimental to the country or the people. This is done not by organizing a vocal or violent demonstration in Colombo City and giving newspaper publicity to it. Sarvodaya first studies the problem, at the Executive Council level, at the Village level, at the Research level and then disseminates this information. Education is Sarvodaya's main arsenal in fighting problems. The correct understanding of a problem, Sarvodaya thinks, is necessary before any attempts are made to fight the problem.

Once a problem is studied steps are made to arm each Sarvodaya organisation with the new information. They in turn through their leaders explain to the people, educate them and then discuss the possible alternatives available to impress the decision-makers about the negative effects of the proposed measure. All pressure groups such as the Buddhist Monks, Sarvodaya Executive Council Members, elites of other religions, interest groups in Sarvodaya etc. are utilised to bring home the message to those who matter. Interviews are sought from decision-makers and facts explained to them from Sarvodaya point of view.

Direct confrontation by the expression of physical powers is not Sarvodaya's way. Instead Sarvodaya believes much could be achieved positively by education, understanding and persuasion. If people are educated the people through their people's power could exercise a positive influence on political decision-making. Direct confrontation polarises opposition and hardens those in power and this leads to more and more decisions being taken in anger or frustration rather than through understanding.

Few people are aware of what Sarvodaya has achieved by this quiet but effective strategy although no wide publicity is given to such achievements. It is because they are not equipped with right knowledge that they always ask why didn't Sarvodaya or Ari protest against this or that matter of the Government? Social injustice prevails in the country: why has Sarvodaya not done anything about it? Are these people aware that Sarvodaya at the village has always been devising practical strategies to ensure social justice for nearly three

decades? From 1958 Sarvodaya activities (and Ari's activities even prior to this) lay bare evidence how Sarvodaya has relentlessly fought against caste prejudices. The convicted criminals in prison are quietly helped by Sarvodaya to find useful employment and to a 'change of heart' eventually leading to a change in the man's entire personality.

Very few today indeed speak of Sarvodaya as a C.I.A. agent or a third estate in the domain of Communist Imperialism. Yet the accusation is made as to Sarvodaya's reception of foreign aid. All countries including the socialist ones depend on substantial foreign aid and assistance. Sarvodaya with its massive quota of activities in nearly over 8000 villages needs lot of aid to foster and maintain these activities. Still no one has computed as to the precise extent of local aid and assistance generated and utilised by Sarvodaya from 1958 up to 1970. Foreign aid actually came to Sarvodaya's assistance in late Sixties and in Seventies. The massive demand for Sarvodaya programmes all over the island necessitated financial assistance. These were made available by foreign donors, on Sarvodaya terms as partners of development and Sarvodaya accepted them.

In this context it is pertinent to cite late Prof. Sugata Das Gupta—who is one of the rare individuals to understand Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka as well as in India.

"This is an age when every country and every micro society, be it a village or a town, is caught in a global turmoil. All nations and organisations of the world are dependent on foreign aid. Even the United States of America, the mightier among the two super powers thrive on foreign aid. It receives, as Kurt Waldheim had calculated "more aid from the third world than it offers".....

"The foreign foundations, so called, own their origin partly to this belated realisation of their debts. The answer lies in examining some of the hyperbolic contentions of the detractors of the S.S.M. How big, for example is the fund that comes to the S.S.M. from abroad.....Without going into the argument in detail, suffice it to say that S.S.M. is only one of 34 or more such other organisations of the island State which receive such funds?".

According to Prof. Das Gupta "foreign aid can never be acceptable, if this Gordian knot of exploitation is not cut off and the recipient could not produce, say sixteen dollars, on the reverse process as a tribute snatched from the donor in favour of the recipient". Prof. Das Gupta knows how Sarvodaya has succeeded in cutting this Gordian knot and the exploitation that comes with foreign aid is cut off. His argument is not for organisations accepting such aid merely because of the fact that the Organisations or Foundations who give such aid are foreign (western) but based merely on ethnical considerations. What are the motives (both conscious and unconscious) of the donors in giving such aid and to what use we put it, and on what terms we do accept it? This is a very practical way of looking at foreign aid rather than the oft repeated argument that all foreign aid because it comes merely from capitalist countries is aid attached to a string and therefore, it should be totally rejected. Dr. Das Gupta's refreshing stance towards such aid articulates Sarvodaya's position clearly and precisely than the expositions of even its most ardent admirers.

Today Sarvodaya is attempting to find local resources to replace many a foreign donor in all possible spheres. If Sarvodaya desires to slow down its phase of expansion much of this foreign assistance could be done away with. For example in all the Pre-schools the teachers were once paid Rs. 100 a month as a nominal allowance. The money was made available by the assistance given by foreign donors. The villagers themselves decided that by their own effort they would attempt to pay this allowance to their most useful Pre-school teachers. This is one step in the right direction done with great sacrifice to replace foreign assistance with local resources.

In this manner Sarvodaya today is making a massive attempt to gradually replace such foreign donations with local assistance with great sacrifice. The accelerated emphasis on programmes destined to create economic regeneration is part of Sarvodaya's present activities. Although economic regeneration was part of Sarvodaya activities at all times, the emphasis laid on it today is much greater in proportion to what was there in the last 30 years. In every village the search now

is for economically self-sustaining programmes and even at the national level one observes how this emphasis on economic gain takes precedence over others.

This Volume includes Ari's mature writings. His ideas have now mellowed both from experience and from penetrative study. They contain wisdom of a different vintage than that one experienced in the earlier two Volumes. Ari is also vigorously forceful in his presentation. The philosophy is now much more visual with the practical implications and forthright comments made with the sincerest objectives. In the essays of the two earlier Volumes, in a sense, Ari was "parochial looking only at Sri Lankan problems. No one could blame him because at that time he was speaking through his "parochial' or limited experiences.

Since then the experiences have outgrown parochial limits: it has reached universal dimensions. Ari travelled in different countries, came into contact with diverse personalities from common men and women to Kings and Queens, Prime Ministers and Presidents and these experiences had matured in him. Today he addresses us with this mellowed wisdom at the back of his mind. These essays are therefore refreshingly invigorating and even a random draught drawn is enough for one to get intoxicated by the philosophical fumes it contains.

There are, of course, obvious shortcomings in Ari too. To expect the reverse is to conceive Ari as a super-human being which he is absolutely not. As a man he has his own frailties as evident in the essays and as seen in the mistakes he had made in the past. I admire him for making these mistakes, immediately recognising the errors and learning from them. He is a man because he makes such mistakes; he is an extraordinary man because he recognises them; he is a noble man because he learns from them and attempts not to repeat them.

I am glad that I have got this opportunity to write this introduction for the third Volume. As Ari's writings extend in many diverse directions I hope several other volumes would be necessary to do justice to his prolific writings and speeches. Let me thank the editor for requesting me to write this

Introduction and let met thank Sarvodaya and Ari for allowing me always to write what I believe. Ari and Sarvodaya have always honoured and respected the other man's views. It is indeed a part of Sarvodaya's great heart, magnanimous and tolerant heritage.

- N R

## SOURCES OF THE SPEECHES AND ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THIS VOLUME

1. **Western and Asian Science - Two ways of seeking knowledge through causes**  
First Lecture delivered in the Kamalnayan Bajaj Memorial Lecture series at the Peace Research Centre, Gujarat Vidyapathi, Ahmedabad, India on 1981 February 9th
2. **Non-violence as a process of transforming action with inner harmony**  
Second Lecture delivered in the Kamalnayan Bajaj Memorial Lecture series at the Peace Research Centre, Gujarat Vidyapathi, Ahmedabad, India on 1981 February 10th
3. **Science and Non-violence come together in Sarvodaya Praxis**  
Third Lecture delivered in the Kamalnayan Bajaj Memorial Lecture series at the Peace Research Centre, Gujarat Vidyapathi, Ahmedabad, India on 1981 February 11th
4. **A New Trail of Enlightenment**  
Convocation Address delivered at Sri Jayawardenapura University, Sri Lanka, after receiving an Honorary Doctor of Literature Degree on 1981 March 7th.
5. **On Survival and development- Lessons from Sarvodaya- A Buddhist inspired Movement for Universal awakening**  
From a Speech delivered at the Conference of World Buddhist Leaders and Scholars at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall on 1982 June 1st.
6. **The Art of Healing Humanity**  
From a Commencement Speech delivered after receiving a Doctor of Humanities (Honours Causa) degree at the graduation ceremony of Emilo Aguinaldo College of Medicine, Philippines on 1983 April 9th.
7. **Vishvodaya through Vishvadhana**  
Speech delivered on receiving the King Baudouin Prize for International Development at the Royal Palace, Brussels, Belgium, on 1982 November 24th.
8. **Religious Path to Peace and Building a Just World**  
Speech delivered to the International Association on Religious Freedom in Tokyo, Japan on 1984 July 31st.

9. **New Approaches to Development - Building a just World**  
Keynote Address delivered at the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations at the United Nations Headquarters, New York on 1984 September 5th.
10. **On Population, Development and Environment**  
From a Speech delivered at the International Youth Workshop organised by the World Assembly of Youth at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute on 1983 December 1st.
11. **Blazing a Path for the World's Poor and the Powerless towards a No-Poverty Society.**  
From the Schumacher Lecture delivered in Bristol, U.K. on 1984 November 10th.
12. **Dwellings for Humanity**  
From the Keynote Address delivered to Tsukuba Expo '85 International Symposium held in Tsukuba Science City, Japan on 1984 October 3rd.
13. **Community Preparedness**  
From a talk delivered at a Symposium held on Disaster Relief at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute on 1984 July 20th.
14. **Religious Youth and Development**  
Keynote Address delivered at the Asian Inter-Religious Youth Forum held in Manila on 1985 April 2nd- co-sponsored by Rissho Kosei-kai (Japan), Bataan Christian Youth Civic Circle and Focolore Movement (Philippines).
15. **Learning in Sarvodaya**  
A Paper presented to the Global Learning Symposium held in Toronto, Canada, sponsored by United Nations University, and Canadian International Development Agency and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1985 April 28th.
16. **Village Studies for Development Purposes**  
(Excerpted for a "paper" presented at the Asian Regional Seminar organised by the Sri Lanka Marga Institute).
17. **People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony**  
Resolution adopted at the conclusion of the General Conference held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, 1983 October 1st and 2nd.
18. **Peace walk to Evoke Humanity**  
A Statement issued in November 1983 prior to the inauguration of the Peace Walk on 2nd December 1983.

## WESTERN AND ASIAN SCIENCE - TWO WAYS OF SEEKING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH CAUSES

### Introductory Remarks:

I consider it a great honour to have been invited to deliver the third lecture series of the *Kamalnayan Bajaj Memorial Lectures*. The two eminent personalities who had delivered the first two lecture series, namely, *Shri Lanza Del Vasto of France* and *Shri Danilo Dolci* of Sicily are two great social reformers of our time. I have read about their noble work but I have not had the good fortune to meet them in person.

I never saw Mahatma Gandhi in flesh and blood. This is in spite of the fact that he had visited and spoken both at *Mahinda College*, Galle, where I had my education and at *Nalanda College*, Colombo, where I was a teacher. He had visited these institutions four years before I was born.

I met *Acharya Vinoba Bhave* briefly on three occasions in 1959, 1960 and 1964 and was greatly inspired by him. Through his *Bhoodan-Gramdan* mission, which I experienced, I could imagine the spirituo-cultural and psycho-social atmosphere Gandhi would have built around his great personality when he was alive.

The historic role that the members of the *Bajaj family* played in the freedom struggle of India and the subsequent contribution made by them towards the propagation of Gandhian ideals in India and outside are well known to me. It is a happy coincidence that the 11th of February, the final day of this lecture series, happens to be the death anniversary of *Shri Jammalal Bajaj*.

I heard recently from a very senior and highly respected Gandhian elder in Sri Lanka, *Shri S. Sivasubramaniam*, that *Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj*, in whose memory this lecture series was founded, was in Sri Lanka as a student in early 1930's.

I had the privilege of meeting *Shri Moraji Desai*, the Chancellor of the *Gujarat Vidyapith*, when he, as the Prime Minister of India graced our Independence celebrations in 1978.

*Professor Ramlal Parikh*, the Director of the Peace Research Institute visited *Damsak Mandira*, the Headquarters of the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement*, about an year ago and we came to appreciate each other as fellow pilgrims proceeding towards a common goal.

The culture from which I come owes its value system to the teachings of *Lord Gautama Buddha*. According to our chronicles Lord Buddha visited Sri Lanka on three occasions. The Great Emperor Asoka blessed our land by sending his son *Arahat Mahinda* and his daughter *Arahat Sangamitta* for a life-long service in my motherland. In fact I have already told you that I had my education at *Mahinda College, Galle, named after Arahat Mahinda*.

From these Introductory Remarks I have made, you will realise that my links with your country, your teachers, your leaders, this Institution, and the person in whose memory these lectures are delivered have a close bearing on my own personality development. It was this realisation that gave me the courage to accept your invitation to deliver these lectures in spite of the fact that I am humbly aware of my intellectual limitations to deal with a subject of such profound relevance to modern civilization such as science and non-violence.

I cannot deal with this subject of science and non-violence in a detached, theoretical and abstract manner. Science and non violence have relevance to me only to the extent that these have a bearing on my own personality and the personalities of others with whom I have direct or indirect relationships. My treatment of this subject will be of a highly personal, subjective and non-academic nature. You have to pardon me for this. I am not decrying the academic. I am simply stating a fact about myself. I like to learn and know things I sincerely believe I can put into practice for the benefit of myself and my fellow beings.

In this first lecture I propose to express some of my thoughts on:

### **Western and Asian Science - Two ways of seeking Knowledge through Causes.**

What goes under the name of science is in actual fact a product of the West by definition, process and application. Development of

modern science and the expansion of the materialistic influence of the West on Asian society took place almost hand in hand. Western expansionism had a definite objective - an objective which was by no means altruistic. It was not the type of *Dharma Vijaya* - triumph of righteousness or conquest by love - that was promoted by *Emperor Dharmasoka* when he sent his saintly son and daughter to Sri Lanka and other Buddhist Missionaries to several other countries. The objective of Western expansion was limitless greed for wealth promoted through violence, untruth and so-called 'science'.

I still remember the first definition of science we were taught at school:

'Science is the quest of man for a universal knowledge of nature'.

I am not sure from what I have seen in Western countries whether in this quest for a universal knowledge of nature, man himself was included as an integral part of nature. On the contrary there is plenty of evidence to believe that man and nature were working at cross purposes. Man was trying to master nature as if he himself was not an integral part of nature. The story of development of science and technology is a sad tale of man's insatiable greed to plunder not only his fellow-men but also his other fellow-creatures in the animal kingdom. Even the plant kingdom and the mineral kingdom were not spared. Man's craving for sensual pleasures and the means he employed to satisfy them blinded him to the truth that out of all living beings only he possessed a supreme mind that could give protection to the rest of the living and the non-living world.

I need not elaborate on the sum total of the results of this quest for so called knowledge of nature and the application of the knowledge thus gained on man and nature. During the last 400 years western science has been shifting the very foundations on which its physical realities were based. The gap between the objective of science and the subjective scientist has been ever widening with every new shift of ground. As far as a layman like me is concerned it had become more and more abstract and remote giving a feeling that science is nothing but a mass of mathematical figures. We were taught that the universe consisted of matter. Then we were told it consisted of molecules and atoms.

Then of protons, neutrons, electric charges and so on. The layman gets the idea that all these discoveries are valid. But they are valid only upto a point. The search for a universal knowledge of nature goes on.

In the process of this so called progress in science the world is getting depleted of its resources. Nature is beginning to show man that it is very much the master of man and man has no choice unless the realisation dawns on him that he is very much an integral part of nature and he has to learn to live with nature. Man is reminded that the relationship between his material planes of existence and his spiritual planes of existence have an integral relationship and only this realisation can save him from the mess into which human civilization has degenerated.

This brings to my mind the world view taught to us by our own Buddhist teachings to which I refer as an example of the Asian science. Let us turn to the words of the *Buddha*.

“Within this fathom long body, equipped with mind and sense perceptions, Oh Monks, I declare unto you, the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path to its cessation”.

There was a definite objective in this enquiry, namely, the release from the bondages of time, space and conditional existence while Western science attempts to limit its quest for a universal knowledge of nature, conceived of as outside of man. In Buddhist science, the primary quest is to go into the nature of man himself thus recognising man as an inseparable part of nature itself.

According to the teachings of the *Buddha* our human life moves around the central pivot of the Mind - Body combination known as Nama-Rupa. He has divided this mind - body combination into *Pancha-kanda* or “Five Aggregates”. The “Five Aggregates” are:

- |    |                 |   |                       |
|----|-----------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1. | <i>Rupa</i>     | - | Body                  |
| 2. | <i>Vedana</i>   | - | Sensation             |
| 3. | <i>Sanna</i>    | - | Perception            |
| 4. | <i>Sankhara</i> | - | Volitional Activities |
| 5. | <i>Vinnana</i>  | - | Consciousness         |

*Rupakhanda* or the Body Aggregate, in this early Buddhist

analysis, consists of certain qualities. These four great elements (Cattari Maha Bhutani)are:

1. *Pathavi* - The quality of extension or solidity
2. *Apo* - The quality of fluidity or cohesion
3. *Tejo* - The quality of heat and
4. *Vayo* - The quality of motion

In the Buddhist teachings *Bhavana* or meditation can be referred to as a technique or a collection of techniques that would facilitate the progressive awakening of the mind as distinct from other modalities of consciousness such as *Vedana*, *Sanna*, *Sankhara*, and *Vinnana*. Not only the human life but the entire sentient world, according to Buddhism, is drawn by this tremendous force-the mind, the craving, the will to live.

The Pali word that Lord Buddha used for ignorance is *Avijja* or non-science. *Vijja* was the word used for science. In the *Dhamma Chakka Pavattana Sutta* which was the first discourse that Lord Buddha delivered after his enlightenment to His first five Disciples, namely, *Kondanna*, *Bhaddiya*, *Vappa*, *Mahanama* and *Assaji*, He identified two extremes that human beings who seek unconditioned happiness should avoid. They were *Kama Sukhallikanuyoga* or pursuit after extreme indulgence in the pleasure of the senses and *Aththakilamatanuyoga* or extreme self-mortification. He asked His followers to pursue *Majjima Patipada* or the Middle Path-the golden mean. He went on to explain that there is suffering in the world. The suffering has an underlying cause. This cause can be removed and there is a path leading to the removal of this cause. Then he went on to explain the path which was named the noble Eight-Fold Path.

1. *Samma Ditti* - Right Understanding
2. *Samma Sankappa* - Right Thoughts
3. *Samma Vaca* - Right Words
4. *Samma Kammantha* - Right Deeds
5. *Samma Ajiva* - Right Livelihood
6. *Samma Vayama* - Right Effort
7. *Samma Sathi* - Right Awareness
8. *Samma Samadhi* - Right Concentration

In the latter part of this discourse He went on to explain how His Insight faculty was progressively awakened (*Chakkun*

*Udapadi*), along with the awakening of Knowledge (*Gnanan Udapadi*), the awakening of the path of Science to complete annihilation of Suffering (*Vijja Udapadi*) and finally, the awakening of the true light of Nirvana (*Aloko Udapadi*).

The scientific method was integral to the series of personality awakening processes which were liberated to bring about the cessation of suffering. It was not simply thirst after knowledge for the sake of satisfying curiosities or for qualitative and quantitative improvements of production processes. The objective was much more profound. The means used to attain the objective was as beautiful and non-violent as the expected goal itself. There was no duality and contradiction in the approach of the *Buddha*.

I am not going to touch upon other Eastern Philosophies including Hinduism because the theoretical foundation on which we in Sri Lanka try to build up the Sarvodaya Philosophy is primarily Buddhist.

In a subsequent discourse the *Buddha* identified a causal process or a condition that has to be realised if one is to attain total liberation from greed, hatred, and ignorance. They are called conditional processes because it is a system where each factor arises as a consequence of other factors. This doctrine was called *Paticca Samuppada* or the Law of Dependent Origination. Lord Buddha identified 12 such factors. They are:

- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Avijja</i>     | - (Ignorance)                |
| 2. <i>Sankhara</i>   | - (Volitional Activities)    |
| 3. <i>Vinnana</i>    | - (Rebirth-Consciousness)    |
| 4. <i>Nama-Rupa</i>  | - (Mind-Body Combination)    |
| 5. <i>Salayatana</i> | - (Six organs of Sense)      |
| 6. <i>Phassa</i>     | - (Contact)                  |
| 7. <i>Vedana</i>     | - (Sensation of Feeling)     |
| 8. <i>Tanha</i>      | - (Craving)                  |
| 9. <i>Upadana</i>    | - (Grasping)                 |
| 10. <i>Bhavo</i>     | - (Becoming)                 |
| 11. <i>Jati</i>      | - (Birth)                    |
| 12. <i>Jara</i>      | - (Decay) and Marana (Death) |

These being conditional processes, when the cause is removed the resulting effect does not arise. When man overcomes *Avijja* or ignorance, *Vijja* or science has to dawn on him. When *Avijja*-

Ignorance is removed Volitional activities do not arise. When Volitional activities cease Rebirth Consciousness does not arise. When Rebirth Consciousness ceases Mind - Body Combination does not arise. Like that, six organs of sense, contact, sensation, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, decay and death respectively do not arise when their preceding causes are removed. The establishment of a series of similarly interdependent, *countervailing* processes, negating each of these conditioning factors leads to the objective of *Nibbana*.

It is with a view to attain this Supreme Enlightenment that knowledge is sought, knowledge leading to wisdom. The processes that are released are utilised to acquire this wisdom. This does not take place through objective instruments and formulation of hypotheses through controlled experiments which are all impersonal and objective. '*Vijja Dadathi Vinayam*' - 'Science leads to discipline'. This discipline, in Buddhist sense, is inner self-discipline. The scientist or the seeker disciplines himself by cultivating respect or harmlessness towards all beings, practice of selflessness, sensual restraint and truthfulness - in other words to shun all evil and cultivate goodness. Such a development of science does not isolate the scientist from his discoveries, from himself, from others and from the processes that he has generated. In other words there would be no atom bombs or hydrogen bombs or nuclear bombs or any other weapons of destruction coming out of scientists' laboratories to be used by himself or by others. The illusion of objectivity and neutrality of scientific discoveries and inventions would disappear. There will be no discontinuity between the physical, natural laws of science and the spiritual laws which explain the nature of the ultimate reality and the human condition.

For the past several centuries the world-view that was dominating Western science was the Newtonian Mechanistic Explanation of the universe. Man was supposed to be capable of building a better life for himself by mastering nature for his own benefit. The energy sources were assumed to be unlimited. The development of science on these lines resulted in a high energy consumption society and the marvels it created brought about high consumption life-styles in industrialised societies and a frantic effort on the part of the poorer nations to catch up with the

former. During the last two decades, this entire structure and world view have been shaken at their very roots. It has suddenly dawned upon us that the world simply does not have the resources, including renewable energy resources, to continue with this extravagance. Human happiness is not proportional to the rate at which we eat up the natural world around us.

Science has turned a full circle. The forgotten, rejected, and the old fashioned world views are coming back to the forefront. If the so-called non-industrialized and the pre-industrialized societies, and also those high energy consuming societies, continue with the way western science developed so far, there is no hope for the future.

This is where *Buddha*, *Asoka* and *Gandhi* are becoming more relevant than ever. On the 24th November 1927, *Mahatma Gandhi* addressing the students of *Mahinda College* said:

“We of the East very often hastily consider that what all our ancestors laid down for us was nothing but a bundle of superstitions. But my own experience, extending now over a fairly long period of the inestimable treasures of the East has led me to the conclusion that, whilst there may be much which is not only not superstitious, but if we understand it correctly and reduce it to practice, gives life and ennobles one. Let us not therefore be blinded by the hypnotic dazzle of the West”.

“Again I wish to utter a word of caution against your believing that I am an indiscriminate despiser of everything that comes from the West. There are many things which I have myself assimilated from the West. There is a very great and effective Sanskrit word for that particular faculty which enables a man always to distinguish between what is desirable and what is undesirable, what is right and what is wrong. That word is known as “Viveka”. Translated into English, the nearest approach is discrimination. I do hope that you will incorporate this word into Pali and Sinhalese”.

I quoted *Gandhiji* here so that you will not misunderstand me thinking that I am despising everything that is Western. This is not my intention. All what I want to say is that western science

should not be confined to an examination of the physical universe and discovering the laws by which it operates. It also should not limit its function in civilization only to the transformation of the life of man by the development of technologies for improved living, overcoming disease, and re-organising the physical environment. Now it's time that science concerns itself with the ultimate purpose or goal of man. Only a discovery of the goal of man's life can lift science from the dangers it has placed on the path to peace and enhance its usefulness as a source of knowledge. This is where the Asian world view of Buddhism, as propounded by the *Buddha*, which I cited as an example has a greater relevance to facing the problems that mankind is confronted with today. This is where science in a more complete sense of definition, processes, application and goal orientation can merge with non-violence.

Let us elaborate a little bit on this statement. In the industrial societies of the West, physical needs of man have been satisfied or the potential has developed to satisfy these to an extent that is unsurpassed during the entire history of mankind. But this has not brought about any general contentment in the mass of people who are going on to create more and more wants. The cumulative effect of these desires has been the creation of a production machinery, complex economic arrangements, and organisational forms all of which have together imprisoned man as the least important creature of this complex system. This is made evident by the fact that the so-called diseases of affluence, suicides, homicides, break-down of families and psychological disturbances have become major social problems. Simple material existence has become a big rat race for survival in the face of soaring price levels and unemployment. The depletion of natural resources, environmental pollution, and energy crises have confused the situation more. Where is happiness for man in a situation like this? Can science stand aloof of this chaotic situation and say that it is neutral?

Great discoveries of science, with their applications through technology, have undoubtedly opened up immense possibilities for our good as well as our detriment. I am going to speak on the good and bad applications of science and technology. At this moment let us consider only the mental climate and attitudes that

have been created as a result of these possibilities. Governments, inter-governmental agencies, and even large non-governmental development organisations have got into a frame of mind to "think big." Undoubtedly when a good part of the world is starving, millions of children are dying of under-nourishment and half of the world's population is lacking the very basic amenities for education, we have to think in terms of mass solutions to these wide-spread problems. But the question I am raising is whether these mass solutions should necessarily involve mass centralization, highly advanced technologies, and unbearable capital costs? Isn't it possible for the genius of the human mind to develop a mass process of awakening in millions of places and in people's minds all over the world tackling this same gigantic problem in a decentralised, low cost, and more realistic manner?

Before I conclude this first lecture, I think you will be interested to know something of my own work in relation to the subject under discussion.

Like India, my own country Sri Lanka was under foreign rule for over four centuries. First under the Portuguese and then under the Dutch, our people in the maritime provinces had their first taste of western Imperialism. They were succeeded by the British who annexed the whole of the country in 1815. We got our Independence from the British in 1948, a few months after India became free.

Sri Lanka followed the same pattern of development like the West for many years. Some of us who were disillusioned with the way the country's official development was fashioned initiated a village level Movement under the leadership of some young teachers and students of *Nalanda College*, Colombo.

We wanted to give a new meaning and purpose to education. We wanted to redefine development based on our own values. We wanted to go to the people and learn from them while working with them. We wanted to discover the type of techniques and methodologies of development which were most appropriate to our rural situation. We wanted to study and experiment on the most suitable institutional arrangement for our village people. Above all we wanted to generate a people's force from the bottom up which would bring to focus that tradition and modernity could be given a new dimension. This Movement was started in the late 1950's.

I am happy to mention here that we drew abundantly from the teachings of *Mahatma Gandhi* and we got highly inspired by the *Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement* led by *Acharya Vinoba Bhave*. *Shri Jayaprakash Narayan* also visited us on two occasions and encouraged us. There were other Gandhian leaders who visited us off and on. But I must say that we did not fashion the Sri Lankan Movement, popularly known as the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, on the identical lines of the Indian Movement. Our greatest source of ideological strength was drawn from the Buddhist teachings. Our work programmes were developed from hard experiences in the field. Our institutional arrangements evolved progressively as response to challenges we had to meet from time to time during the last 23 years.

We started from the remotest and the most backward villages of Sri Lanka. Today we have reached organizationally more than 3500 villages. A total of nearly 1 1/2 million people are involved with our programmes. We have established a network of over 200 Centres and Development Educational Institutions in all parts of the country. People of all races, ethnic groups and religious communities in the country participate in the Movement as equals. We do not dabble in power and party politics. Yet by concrete developmental action, we have shown that a people's participatory politics, where the highest virtues could be brought into play, is a realistic possibility in spite of the complexities in our modern society. We have taken our Movement beyond our shores. Hundreds of foreign youth who have had the opportunity to work with us in Sri Lanka have started similar efforts in their own countries. These include industrialised countries as well as countries of the non-industrialised world. We believe that through the international programme, we have made quite a few of our brothers and sisters in the industrialised countries aware of alternative patterns of living and the need for a new world order based on values which have a relevance to all aspects of life.

## NON-VIOLENCE AS A PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING ACTION WITH INNER HARMONY

In my first lecture among the facts I tried to impress upon you were the following.

1. Science has relevance to our modern problems only if it keeps in harmony with our highest spiritual aspirations.
2. The scientific process and technology also must not be alienated from higher wisdom.
3. These processes should enrich our total personality, with every step taken.
4. In releasing these processes, science should always be aware of the limits of natural resources and the laws of nature within which they should function.
5. The Institutions that are created for these purposes should be human scale; we must not become subservient to them.

What was the supreme goal that all the great leaders on whom our Movement is based kept before themselves in relation to the rest of the world? *Lord Buddha* taught us that out of all levels of beings in the countless realms of existence whom He could see through His supremely awakened mind, it was only the human being who had the potential to attain highest enlightenment. Other beings in the endless *Sansaric Journey* of birth, death and rebirth should first have to be born as human beings before they can develop their minds to supreme enlightenment. In other words, He raised man above all other living forms and admonished him to think and live for the well-being of the entire living world. In His teachings, man was asked to extend his loving kindness unreservedly to the entire living world. Non-violence therefore, along with self-denial was at the very centre of His teachings.

*Dharmasoka* in his rock edicts very clearly says,  
“*Save Manusa Mama Paja*” (*Kalinga Lekha*)

which means “All human beings are my children”. He was the only ruler in the history of the world who gave complete

compassion and protection to all sentient beings and implemented a Public Welfare Policy for the well-being of not only human beings, but also for animals. He introduced to the world hospitals and medical programmes extending to the animal kingdom also. A study of the Asokan inscriptions alone would be enough to realize that the lofty ideals placed before the world by *Lord Buddha* could be realized in practice by rulers who would set before themselves a noble ideal to work for. *Asoka* said,

“*Nasthihi Kanmatharan Sarva Loka Hithathva* -There is no greater work for me than to work for the well- being of the whole world”.

Thus, science and non-violence are implicit in this noble wish of *Asoka the Righteous*.

Coming down to more recent times, *Mahatma Gandhi* addressing *Young Men's Buddhist Association* in Colombo on the 25th November 1927 said,

“I am anxious that you should be the pioneers of presenting Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and through Ceylon the world, with a real Buddhistic revival; that you should be the pioneers in presenting a living faith to the world and not the dead bones of a traditional faith which the world will not grasp”.

Again, a day later addressing *The Jaffna Students' Congress* *Mahatma Gandhi* said,

“If we are to be non-violent we must not wish for anything on earth which the meanest or the lowest of human beings cannot have.....then it follows that we may not barter away our ancient simplicity for anything on this earth. Now you will perhaps understand my determined opposition to the modern rush. The hypnotic dazzle that seems almost overcome and overtake us; and that is coming to us with such violent force from the West”.

*Anagarika Dharmapala*, the greatest Buddhist revivalist of recent times who awakened our nation to freedom and who spent a great part of his life in India and passed away in 1937 at Sarnath, expressed the same views during his struggle for a Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka and India.

In the light of the above expressions of wisdom, it should be clear to us that nothing short of an acceptance of the ideal of "Respect for all life" is relevant to the truly civilised mind. The Western scientists never had this goal before them when they launched upon discovering the secrets of nature and started laying down hypotheses. Of course with every new discovery on a subject, its earlier hypotheses were replaced by new hypotheses and thus, the scientific enquiries continued. What Lord Buddha discovered through His insight about the laws of nature have been reconfirmed by modern science. The laws of well-being which Lord Buddha discovered were giving man an opportunity, and opening a way, revealing how the discoveries of the causes of phenomena can be moulded to build a more enlightened human being with a more peaceful society. In other words, while the picture of the physical world the Buddha propounded corresponds exactly with that modern science, he placed the human mind at the centre of all phenomena.

*"Mano Pubban Gama Dhamma - Mano Settha Mano Maya."* All phenomena are preceded by the mind. Mind is supreme and mind creates them".

Thus, we create the world making it good or bad for ourselves. *Good Kamma* or good volition results in *Good Vipaka* or benefits. The *Bad Kamma* results in *Bad Vipaka*.

The importance of the Sarvodaya is seen here. "*Sarva Udaya*" is awakening of all. The supreme goal of science we accept is to discover those psycho-physical laws and peaceful processes which will help us to realise within our own selves as individuals, families, social groups, village and urban communities, national states, and the world community the ideal and the ways of the awakening of one and all.

It is only when humanity is awakened to this realisation that science merges with non-violence. Further, it would lead us to the realisation that whatever that we think, speak, or do that would bring about harm to sentient beings and bring about imbalances in nature such as the plant kingdom, or the depletion of the non-renewable resources is primarily unscientific. In other words, science becomes, in actual fact, a manifestation of ignorance when it brings about violence on man and nature. On the other hand, if science helps us to live with nature, in contentment, then

science becomes equated to a process leading to enlightenment.

What is it that stands in the way of the human being to the realisation and practice of science as enlightenment leading to the well-being of all- Sarvodaya?

We can think of four mental defilements or *Sathara Agathi*. First is the petty feelings we harbour in our minds towards other human beings. When in our minds we alienate ourselves from other human beings on grounds of caste, race, religion, nationality, colour, class and so on, our mind no longer is free to see reality as it is. The illusion called "self" takes hold of us and all other mental evils such as jealousies, ambitions, inferiority and superiority complexes arise. This, in other words, is the second defilement which we may call *Dvesha* or ill-will. This leads to *Bhaya* or fear. Fear leads to violence with the accompanying ideas of self-righteousness.

The sum-total of the three above defilements is delusion or *Moha* - not knowing the reality of the phenomena of life. How can we overcome these defilements? Firstly, instead of discrimination we have to develop Compassion or Metta. Metta is a mental state, every human being, desirous of his or her personality awakening, should strive to relentlessly develop. Metta is friendliness or loving kindness towards all living beings. This can be extended even to include the plant kingdom. Metta can be cultivated by processes of meditation wherein one strives to realise through deep concentration three laws of human nature.

Firstly the fact that everything physical and mental is subject to continuous change - *Anicca*. Secondly, the fact that attachment to that which is transient brings about unhappiness - *Dukkha*. Thirdly, that which is transient does not have a permanent entity, 'self' or the 'ego' - *Anatta*. The realisation of these three laws leads one to strive to realise one's true emptiness. It leads one to be one with the entire universe shedding all traces of mental reservations and discriminations. The absolute realisation of metta leads a person to say,

"Done is what has to be done. Laid down is the burden"

How different this is from Western science where no scientist has yet acclaimed, "Done is what has to be done. Laid down is the burden".

Respect for life or *Metta* when established in man's mind, invariably leads him to compassionate action which we call *Karuna*. *Karuna* is the physical manifestation of *Metta*. *Karuna* is the sum-total of all those thoughts, words and deeds of a human being which have been shared by him with other living beings to bring about the removal of causes that have brought about suffering in them.

We in Asia need not go too far to observe suffering. We have only to peep out of our homes to see the malnourished, the sick, and the illiterate fellow human beings in our neighbourhoods. At the same time, if our minds are sufficiently penetrating we also can see the suffering among the materially affluent around us who live in fear because of their ignorance of the true nature of human life. In the words of *Acharya Vinoba Bhave* we will realise.

"That the rich have already fallen. The poor have not yet risen up".

According to *Dr. James P. Grant*, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's fund,

"Roughly one quarter of the world's people have seen their lives change from material well-being to unprecedented affluence; roughly one quarter have made the transition from hardship to relative comfort; roughly one quarter have seen the promising beginnings of an improvement in their lives, and roughly one quarter have been left behind".

"The plainest lesson which the past brings to the future is that progress does not automatically benefit the poor and that if absolute poverty is to be shed, then it is the by-passed people of the earth who must now be placed first".

Thus, *Karuna* or Compassionate Action has immense scope for practice in our societies. The present generation witnessed two world wars and an innumerable number of smaller wars between nations and within nations. Science and technology contributed in no small measure to these violent outbursts because they were the product of an alienated process. Though they remained neutral the processes they released were by no means neutral.

In the modern world in nearly all countries, rich as well as

poor, the single highest expenditure item on their budgets is military expenditure. This expenditure for destruction is not confined to the allocation of scarce physical resources. This also involves man-power, skills, and education. Just imagine that the value system of Emperor *Asoka* dawns on our modern leaders. Then do you think they would spend twenty times more money on armaments than what they spend for development purposes to alleviate the sufferings of our people? Isn't it fair to say that in the thought of *Metta* or the practice of *Karuna* the bypassed traditional cultures of the world possessed a more constructive global world view than the post-industrial consumption cultures whose universal view is conditioned by considerations of power acquisition, resources enhancement, production output, and control of world markets.

In our traditional view *Metta and Karuna leads to Muditha* or Altruistic Joy-Joy of living in the service of others. How many of the political leaders of the world, captains of industry, proprietors of multi-national companies, commanders of armies who can kill their adversaries without seeing them, and the economic brains who give logistical sustenance to these powers from the background, can claim the joy of living that a humble village-level worker experiences after saving the life of one out of hundred million children who suffer from malnutrition?

The cumulative effect of *Muditha* or the joy of service is a happy and a contented community. The psycho-sphere they create in their small communities is one of love, understanding, sharing, neighbourliness, and intimacy. This is where true humanity flourishes. No wonder that when *Chairman Mao* gave the call to his followers,

“Serve the people, learn from the people, do what you learn and do it scientifically”,

he was echoing the words of Gandhiji. No wonder that one thousand million people in China today have raised their average life expectancy from forty five years to seventy years in less than twenty years. Malnourishment is almost made extinct. Primary school attendance has increased to 94% and the infant mortality rate has been brought down to a minimum. Still China is a poor country. But shared love and sacrifice have made them one of the strongest nations. I had the happy experience of being with them

four months ago in their people's communes where this spirit of service has been scientifically and organizationally realised.

What is the equivalent of this joy of service you will find in the industrialised societies of the West? I have already mentioned that diseases of affluence, alienation among people and psychological imbalances are rampant in these societies in spite of the consumer-oriented super-structure they have created with science and technology. The psychological infrastructure leading to the joy of living a meaningful life is difficult to be seen. A psycho-sphere impregnated with anxiety, worldly achievements, and individualism seems to dominate these societies. The social infrastructures are institutionalised, departmentalised and computerised in such a way that the human communities function in almost the same mechanistic way that automated complex factories would work. There is hardly any scope to develop *Metta* or practice *Karuna* which only would lead to *Muditha* or Altruistic Joy.

Certainly, *Upekkha* or *Equanimity* is a personality characteristic that is hard to come by in these societies. You may feel that I am over simplifying and generalising on the conditions that prevail in industrial societies. This may be so, but I warned you that what I say is based on personal impressions and feelings I got when I came in touch with these communities very frequently during the last fifteen years. Does this mean that there is no hope for man and society in those countries? I do not say that. On the other hand, I do believe that if we in India and Sri Lanka truly follow the path of the *Buddha*, *Asoka*, *Dharmapala* and *Mahatma Gandhi* I do believe that by putting our own houses in order we can give a direction by example to these countries who need our help more than we need their help.

Why do I say they need our help more than we need theirs? Coming back to the first principle enunciated by the *Buddha* namely,

“Mind is supreme, mind is the fore-runner and mind is the origin”

we are in a better position still to restructure our societies than they are to restructure theirs. As *Willy Brandt's* report points out, one American citizen needs one hundred and nine times of the

quantity of energy that a Sri Lankan needs to survive. *Jeremy Rifkin* in his new fascinating book called 'Entropy' talking about the American pattern of living says,

"An average human diet consists of two thousand calories daily. Yet, the amount of energy calories we individually consume every day in our cars, our electricity, our processed foods and so on amounts to about two hundred thousand calories or more than a hundred times the quantity we absolutely need. In terms of energy consumption, though Americans number only 225 million people our energy needs are equivalent to that of over 225 billion individuals".

In *Mahamangala Sutta*, *Buddha* outlines 38 suspicious factors. *Santhutti* "Contentment" is one of these. In the *Dhammapada* he says,

"*Santhutti Paraman Dhanan* - Contentment is the supreme wealth".

We have to help the consumer societies build a psycho-social infrastructure where instead of the mad rush towards the creation and satisfaction of more and more material wants they are encouraged to cultivate contentment with regard to their material wants and devote more of their time and energy towards self-fulfillment in spiritual, moral and cultural realms. The path to such a change in the course of their lives lies in an awakening that we can bring about in them by our examples. If we set the right example, I am sure, their mad and costly rush towards self-aggrandizement could be checked and they could be brought on to the middle path. Only under a situation like that will they understand the true significance of a new International Economic Order and divert their wasted resources and energies to alleviate the human suffering in less affluent continents of the world.

Now let us talk a little bit about the economic assumptions of the scientific and technological era we have been discussing. Anyone with common sense can realise that both the capitalist and marxist approaches to building up a just and righteous world order have failed. If they succeeded, at least the bare rudiments of an ideal society where man is non-violent towards his fellow-men could have been seen by us. This has not happened. There is not

even a faint hope that this will happen in future. Both these social forms worship at the idol of the same god of materialism. They all measure their progress only by physical and sometimes socio-cultural attainments. The level of progress made in the science of spiritual awakening in man cannot be measured by them. We have to look for some other model. The search has to begin from within ourselves.

On my part, I would unceremoniously reject the four classical factors of production the economists of both the capitalist and marxist breeds have taken for granted, from *Adam Smith to Karl Marx* and *Keynes to Friedman*. What are these four factors of production for the efficient combination of which all the discoveries of western science and technology were used? They are *Land, Labour, Capital and Entrepreneurship or Organisation*. Millions of years of social evolution of the human species has been diverted in a few hundred years towards an entirely new and materialistic direction, in the name of providing human society their sustenance.

Land which was always an integral part of nature in our societies came to be identified as a factor of production with a value attached to it. Fences and walls which were used to keep away stray animals from cultivated land came to be used as marks of proprietary rights and barriers to keep away human beings. The degeneration and alienation of land from nature for the sake of economic production, reduced man to the level of the beast. Under the capitalist system private ownership and under the socialist system common ownership were recognised and given legal status. However, the point I am trying to make is the fact that land becoming a factor of production became a plaything in the hands of producers whose ideological make-up and behavioural patterns were conditioned by the market forces or production targets. Without any consideration to laws of nature or laws of morality governing the human being, land was enclosed, fragmented, bought or sold, fertilized or made infertile without any respect for any other living beings in nature or ecological and environmental considerations. The earth worm that made our earth fertile was exterminated with chemical fertilizers. The beautiful birds who gave nourishment to our aesthetic senses were killed or came to be caged in our homes or imprisoned in zoological

gardens and natural reserves. The input for agriculture became so prohibitive that the traditional farmers had to leave their homesteads for urban slums and polluted factory environments. Application of chemical inputs by way of fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides have become so high that the food we eat today is no longer grown on the soil but rather from oil.

Let's take the second factor of production - Labour. In the same way that land was alienated from nature, labour was also isolated from the human being. In the economic jargon of capitalism and state-communism the human being had no place except being a unit of labour. In other words labour could be bought, sold, bargained, valued, replaced by machinery and automated. The total human being was slowly disappearing into oblivion in economic science. The moment man was not capable of selling his labour because of old age or sickness or some other expediency he was left out of the economic process. Of course, he could retire, get his pension or other social insurance benefits. All that is done not because he is a human being but he possessed a saleable product called labour. Right from the inception of the industrial revolution in England up to the modern times of labour strikes in communist Poland, economic science whether it was of the capitalist brand or the marxist brand had not elevated man to the status of a total personality. It is true that the ability to think and work are two most important human attributes. But the ability to feel as a total human being in freedom is also necessary for total personality awakening. When we were reduced to being units of labour in the economic production process we lost our personality for a pound of bread.

The third factor of production is capital. In my own country from the fourth century B.C. up to the eleventh century A.D., when the Buddhist philosophy was predominantly influencing every aspect of life of man and society, huge water reservoirs, irrigation canals, towering stupas, temples, hospitals and educational institutions were built. In modern terms these were unsurpassed capital-investment construction works that have been carried out. We never had slave labour in our country. Yet, most willingly under a just economic system the community pooled all their resources and constructed these marvellous common structures. The rulers and the ruled, under the advice of the

*Sangha*, the Buddhist clergy, joined together to build this economic and social infrastructure. The capital was the creativity, energy, technology and knowledge of the people themselves as a whole. This situation is no longer true for our countries who look up to the rich countries and international finance institutions for aid and loans to buy their expensive and inappropriate technologies. No wonder that the poor countries have no control over these capital resources. They also find it impossible to control inflation and check unemployment. Social unrest and poverty are everyday occurrences.

Entrepreneurship is the modern economic substitute for science and knowledge which prevailed in our societies. There is a big difference between the scientific knowledge at the disposal of a community which can be commonly used to produce their needs and what is termed entrepreneurship which is a capitalist device to face challenges of production and market forces and to make the most profitable in-roads into a consumer market. This is irrespective of the fact whether the goods and services that one produced cater to the needs of man or the wants created by the entrepreneurs themselves by various psychological devices. In other words, the most intelligent and clever people in our societies are pitted against one another in a rat race which leads the community nowhere.

The above four factors of production are the very foundations of structural violence prevailing in our societies. Our societies have to be restructured once again so that we face our problems of worldly human existence bringing together our own traditional factors of progress, namely Nature, the Human Being, the Society and Knowledge together in a psycho-social climate of respect for Life, Compassionate Action, Altruistic Joy, Equanimity, Sharing, Pleasant Language, Constructive Activity and Equality in association.

In other words, we have to usher in a new era of non-violence where it is neither aggression nor inaction but a process of transforming action in harmony with the deepest and the best laws of our Being.

## SCIENCE AND NON - VIOLENCE COME TOGETHER IN SARVODAYA PRAXIS

Today is the third and last lecture of this series. Today is also the death anniversary of *Shri Jamnalal Bajaj* the father of *Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj*. I heard that Shri Jamnalal Bajaj was popularly known as the living trustee of *Gandhiji*. *Gandhiji* himself had said on several occasions that “there are no activities of mine where *Bajaj* has not participated”. Khadi activities and animal husbandry programmes for *Sarvodaya* have been made possible through the *Bajaj* funds. When he died, his wife is said to have wanted to follow “Sati” (immolation on the husband's funeral pyre). But *Gandhiji* showed her the alternative path by requesting her to sacrifice all her jewels to build a “Gopuri-meaning a place for cows” near Wardha.

In the two previous lectures, I expressed my thoughts on science and non-violence drawing mostly from the Buddhist culture from which I come. In this concluding lecture I feel it is my duty to place before you a simple and pragmatic course of action to bring science and non-violence into practice in our own lives and groups. We have to do it in such a way that it can even pave way for a new world order where science and technology would always have a spiritual and human content. During the course of this lecture I will cite some *Sarvodaya* experiences in Sri Lanka as examples of the course of action I place before your consideration.

I hardly used the word development during these lectures. The word development has been used in a very narrow sense and with hardly any depth of meaning to human life. Just like science, development was also defined, formulated and carried out in a highly dehumanized way. But, this word development has come to stay in our vocabularies. So we have to disentangle it from superficialities and artificialities and give it a meaning which gives it relevance to us as human persons, as parents, elders, children, youth and so on, and not as politicians, bureaucrats, donors, recipients, target groups, experts, administrators, planners, and technocrats.

I would define development as a process of awakening. This awakening should simultaneously take place within individuals, families, other small human groups, village and urban communities, national communities, and the world community. Also this awakening should be an all embracing and an integrated process in which man's spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political, and economic life is inextricably involved. Science helps us in this awakening process to understand the laws of life and nature.

Our word for awakening is "*Udaya*". As human beings the unfolding of our total personality towards the goal of self-realisation, which may be named *Nibbana*, *Moksha*, *God or Heaven*, according to one's own convictions, is the awakening of our total personality. We in Sri Lanka have named it "*Purna Paurushodaya*".

The most natural and intimate social unit which helps us in the personality awakening process is the family. The awakening of the family unit depends on the degree to which certain characteristics such as sharing, pleasant language, constructive activity and equality, are dynamically operative within the family group. We have named awakening of the family as *Kutumbodaya*.

Our countries are still predominantly rural and consist of village communities. The awakening of the village community as a whole based on a peaceful and dynamic psychological infrastructure, and a self-reliant and co-operative social infrastructure contributes to the awakening of the individuals and families. This awakening process of the village communities we have named "*Gramodaya*". When we refer to urban communities, this awakening process we have named "*Nagarodaya*". When we extend this concept to include self-government of rural and urban communities we call it "*Gramaswarajyaya*" or "*Nagaraswarajyaya*".

This concept of awakening when extended to national communities and the international community is called '*Deshodaya*' and '*Vishvodaya*' respectively.

When I spoke of the law of dependent origination, in my first lecture, you may remember that, I mentioned the causality of the 12 factors involved, each condition being influenced by the cumulative effect of all the other factors and the immediate effect

of the preceding factor. In the same way *Paurushodaya* or the full awakening of personality, influences the awakening of the family, the village, the urban community, the nation, and the world, and vice versa. Similarly, *Vishvodaya* or the awakening of the humanity as a whole will influence the awakening of the individual and other groups. Here is a conceptual foundation for human development (awakening) which have a common value component and an underlying organic relationship. In other words, a universally acceptable ideology is found here, in which non-violence is an intrinsically and inseparably found ingredient.

The scientific enquiries and technological innovations have to be built or restructured based on this non-violent and holistic foundation. Science as we mentioned before, therefore, has not only to pay its attention to the laws of nature in relation to the physical universe, but, it also has to reformulate these laws keeping in mind as Buddhists would say the three central laws governing the world of human life:

1. The law of Cause and Effect (Kamma)
2. The Law of Change (Anicca) and
3. The Law of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppada).

To start this process of *Udaya* or awakening one need not wait until one is in a position of authority or until a government or such other organization initiates action on these lines. One has to face the reality that there are no rulers of the stature of *Asoka* living today. That does not mean that we the ordinary people cannot initiate action. We can initiate action as human beings beginning with our own life. We can initiate action as members of a family or a group of families. We can initiate action within this University as groups of students or teachers. That is how we at *Nalanda* started the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka*. Similarly, any ruler of a country can initiate action in this way. The United Nations Organisation, if it has got a cohesive ideology, can start on this.

The foundation of such action invariably has to be spiritual and not technocratic. Here lies the secret why the first and second United Nation's decades fell short of their development targets. Here lies the reason why the Green Revolution ended with colourless dust in the air and soils devoid of earth worms and fertility. Here lies the reason why the largest lending organisation

in the world, the World Bank, is groping in the dark in their so-called Integrated Rural Development. How can there be integration when spiritual, cultural, and moral values of man are not made to be integral parts of their process of planning and plan implementation? They all are trying to change the external physical environment of man beginning with themselves to seek happiness by trying to understand the secrets within their fathom long body; to find "the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path of its cessation". We are now living in an era where development can no longer be limited to feasibility studies, project formulations and plan implementation, evaluation and so on. This is an era where development has to be lived especially by those at the top positions.

Of course this sort of quest releases an entirely different process from the forces used to release high-energy consuming, planning and implementation processes. If they begin to look within themselves then only they will learn the art of understanding people and the science of helping them. Unless they change themselves radically they cannot bring happiness to themselves or to the people they want to serve. We should invite them to follow the examples of work which are already initiated by groups like *Sarvodaya* in thousands of places in Sir Lanka, in India, in Europe, in the North and South Americas and Africa.

We also would like to share with them our spiritual approach to transcend time, space and matter. We may be living in any place. We, as human beings have as our supreme goal the realisation of an unconditioned happiness. Not only after the realisation of our goal, but even while we are striving on the path to that realisation we have to be happy. In other words, every moment we have to be happy. We should see ourselves as the coming together of certain psychophysical forces for a very momentary existence; similarly, learn to look at all the other living beings and objects around us. We should see the futility of clinging to objects of sensuous desire, clinging to wrong views, clinging to mere rule and ritual, and clinging to the ego or a separate identity. This will make us very light-hearted. This will make us use other beings as subject to the same sort of *Sanathana Dharmas* or eternal laws. Oneness of all will become our guiding thought in life. This makes us not deceive our fellow beings; this makes us not do nay injury to our fellow beings; this

makes us selfless and work for our own further enlightenment by being of service to others.

In other words, Truth, Non- violence, and Self-denial should become three great principles that guide our life. When in this mental situation, we are on the right scientific track and we will look for what we have got with us to offer the world and not look for ways and means of using science and technology to exploit and bring harm on others.

May we have only our thoughts, feelings, and physical effort which could be shared with others. Wherever we are, in India, United States, Russia, Sri Lanka or any other place, we can find ways and means of sharing that effort, the *Shrama*, with others. That is *Shramadana*. We may have with us knowledge which can lead us to wisdom. Let us offer this to others and perform *Buddhidana*. We may have mastered some scientific and technological skills which could be offered to increase the yield in a poor farmer's homestead, to cure and prevent disease in an ailing family, or open the vistas of education to an illiterate, village community. Let us offer this *Shilpadana* or *Vidyadana* to them. We may possess a spiritual experience which is needed by a man addicted to intoxicants, crimes, possessions, greed, and hatred. He needs us and let us gift to him our *Dharmadana*. We may be spending our wealth in a wasteful way and there is so much that a poor family can do to satisfy their Basic Human Needs, from a part of our wealth or land that can be spared by our self-restraint. Let us offer them to those in need. Practise *Dhanadana* and *Bhoodana*.

All these may appear to you to be acts of losing what we possess. Let us remind ourselves the words of *Jesus Christ*, who said "Lose thyself to find thyself". The more you possess yourself with your own volition, the more you will find yourself. Always remember the *Buddha's* words that "*Craving*" or *Thanha* is at the root of all evil and suffering in this world. The path to happiness is through overcoming this suffering. We cannot wait until tomorrow. We have to begin it now. Let us cast away our caste, race and creed. Let us cast away our greed here and now and the revolution for the new world order begins.

Do you realise, if millions of individuals all over the world, as simple individuals, go through this mental transformation, what

they can really achieve? They can lay the foundation for a new world order which will no longer be fashioned after possessive and competitive instincts promoted by giving a monetary value to the classical factors of production, land, labour, capital, and organisation. They can give meaning, purpose, and dynamism by looking at nature as a whole, looking at our own and others' personality in totality, considering all the human, natural and acquired resources of skills as social capital and laying an organisational infrastructure where insight, knowledge, wisdom, science and liberation become integral parts of the whole society.

To start this revolutionary Movement human beings need only a change of mind. I repeat, they don't need legal recognition and they don't need to bother about the inhuman, impersonal and gigantic technological monstrosities that are around them.

From the individual we can take our message to the family. Let us consciously adopt a pattern of living which does not require high consumption of non-renewable energy. Let us educate our families how to discriminate between our needs and our wants. Let us practise every morning and evening a few minutes of meditation to imbibe within ourselves less of materialistic values and more of spiritual values. Let us grow as much of our own grains and vegetables, yams and leaves, fruits and flowers, using only natural manure. In this whole process of changing the living patterns within the family, we should not forget the good things in modern physical and social sciences. We must convince for ourselves by practice that small and simple things are great and profound. Relate our knowledge and the knowledge of our brothers and sisters and our children have gained from their school learning to the new family unit we are evolving in the world.

If we are living in a so-called affluent family, we should try to get ourselves linked with an economically poor family in our neighbourhood, in our village or in our country, or maybe in another country. We should come into human contact with them, with the idea of learning from their own life experiences based on the same universal value system we are following. In the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* in Sri Lanka we have started a Sri Lankan - German dialogue programme where families in our villages have established a relationship like that with some

families in Germany. They not only share their experiences, they also share their affluence. There is no giver or taker. All are sharers in one integrated process. This is a sort of the Law of Conservation of Energy extended to the social field.

Wherever we can extend this programme to groups of families or villages and initiate group awakening activities, there we get a chance to practise sharing - *Dana* - on a bigger scale and with greater application of appropriate science and technologies. What is the difficulty of one such initiated family calling to their home several other families to discuss the mutual values they have accepted and the way their practices can be extended? In Sri Lanka we call this sort of meeting where men, women, and children get together '*A Family Gathering*'. This has only become possible after we progressively discard the foolish labels we have been attaching to ourselves in the form of caste, race, religion and so on. Sharing a meal, doing a session of few minutes meditation, doing a few hours of manual work, are simple things that can have a profound multiplying effect. In Sri Lanka, today, in at least 3,000 villages in the country, every evening simple village communities come together for such meditation, sing-song, discussion, and education. This can happen anywhere in the world including small communities in the industrialised countries.

The psychological infrastructure thus established through shared work and Family Gatherings we extend into an organisational form we call building a social infrastructure. This means that in the village or urban group we help them to form themselves into Children's Groups (of both Pre-School and School-going children), Youth Groups, Farmers' Groups, Mothers' Groups and other Elders' Groups. I am not going into the technicalities of this group formations but suffice it to say that this social infrastructure building can be done in a very rational way using the knowledge we have accumulated from the social sciences.

These Groups could be guided to link themselves with 10 Basic Human Needs which we have identified and subdivided into nearly 170 Sub-Needs. The 10 Basic Needs are:

1. A clean and Beautiful Environment
2. A clean and an Adequate Supply of Water
3. Simple Clothing

4. Food
5. Health Care
6. Communications
7. Simple Housing
8. Energy Requirements
9. Total Education and
10. Spiritual and Cultural Needs.

These when subdivided and identified by the different group formations, the next step is to satisfy one or more of them by their own ingenuity in a progressive way. This means the knowledge, the techniques, the technologies and the resources that exist in the village can be harnessed for self- development to the extent that people's higher values have been awakened by a continuous process of psychological and spiritual strengthening.

As *Prof. Detlef Kantowsky of the University of Konstanz* observed in a study on *Sarvodaya*:

"The way a community goes about satisfying the needs it has identified for itself on the basis of this list will be entirely conditioned by the specific factors that prevail in a particular situation. This socio-ecological definition of the concept allows its application under varying circumstances and favour combinations at the family, village and regional level where a limited number of rural- oriented centres and the villages of the area will combine and exchange the skills, products and resources necessary for the satisfaction of needs that have been adjusted to the conditions of the environment".

So far you would not have noticed that I was talking about *Dharma Shakti or Jana Shakti* that can be awakened and diverted for constructive action. Dharma Shakti is the power of Righteousness and Jana Shakti is the Inherent Strength of the people. These processes necessitate plenty of trained personnel not only in organisational and community leadership skills but also knowledgeable in appropriate technologies. To meet this need we have set up all over our country Development Education Centres numbering over 200. In these places, training programmes, ranging from nutrition, health care, pre-school education, masonry, carpentry, house-construction and brick-

making to skills such as savings, investment and credit programmes, tool-making, and water pump construction work etc. are carried out.

Initially, when a Movement of this nature gathers momentum politicians of all colours get alarmed. Bureaucracies get excited. This is a situation where we have to command all our spiritual energies to be patient and make them understand what we are attempting to do. We are trying to conquer time, space, and matter. Most of them are imprisoned into a time frame-work of periods between elections, a space frame-work of the number of seats they can win at elections and a matter frame-work of land, labour, capital, and organisation which they have inherited from western materialism. I am not blaming them for this. Only politicians of Gandhiji's calibre can break through these barriers. Therefore, we have to be very, very patient when politicians fail to look at what we are doing, with magnanimity and understanding. We have to educate them through sacrifice and example.

It took us over two decades to bring this understanding in them to a point of their being not a nuisance to us. I must make use of this occasion to pay a high tribute to our first Executive President of Sri Lanka *His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene* and our Prime Minister *Hon. R. Premadasa*, for publicly recognising the great value of the work we are doing and giving us all encouragement in our effort to build up a Sarvodaya Social Order in Sri Lanka. Once the political leaders are made to accept the validity of what we are doing the next obstacle that remains to be surmounted is the western educated bureaucracy. In Sri Lanka thanks to the indigenous cultural elements which still are found in most of our administrators, we have found the majority of them appreciating and encouraging our Movement.

It is not easy to reach this level of harmony. It takes time and patience. As *Gandhiji* mentioned you have to pass through five stages before you qualify to continue this constructive work as a 'Sansarik' mission. You have to go through indifference, ridicule, abuse, oppression, and the worst of all praise. Praise is the greatest enemy of a public worker, because it can bloat up his ego.

The Village Awakening or *Gramodaya* process could be given a universal application by bringing village groups into contact with similar groups in other countries.

We have already done this type of village to village link-up programme by linking villages in Sri Lanka with those of other far off countries such as Belgium, Netherlands, and Norway. Here again we circumvent the technological barriers by a process of personality and group awakening on a spiritual, moral and cultural foundation. Multiplication of this type of programme on a broader scale can lay a network of human relationships to understand one another better. The communication systems which are generally being used for not so worthwhile purposes can be used for understanding, peace and sharing through this sort of programme. Every year we have been earning substantial incomes for our villages by getting these groups in affluent societies to directly buy our village products. Here is another example of how international economic systems can be by-passed by determined and concerned groups. This type of action in some countries have been named alternative world trade, third world shops, one world shops and so on. Most of the people young and old who serve in these shops do a voluntary service as their contribution to helping the poor world nations to get a better deal. These may appear to be small things compared to the gigantic multinational trade flows that are taking place between countries. But these small things and the small people who give life to such ideas are the pointers to the new world relationships that will be emerging in the years to come. Along with this type of direct trade relationship there is a vast development education programme that is also being implemented in these countries.

In a number countries these basic groups who are thus linked together have formed themselves into National Groups such as *The German Sarvodaya Group, the Belgium Sarvodaya Shramadana Branch and the Netherlands Sarvodaya Groups*. At national and inter-national levels they meet and discuss how best the *Sarvodaya* values could be transformed into a National Awakening Movement in their own countries. *Prof. Detlef Kantowsky* in his book '*Sarvodaya, the Other Development*' gives a number of examples of similar Movements in the west such as the Voluntary Simplicity Movement.

Almost all industrialised countries have well organised non-governmental or private organisations whose aim is to help non-industrialised countries. Some of them still go about their business

with the motive of civilizing the people in this part of the world. There are a few others who shamelessly but shadily continue with religious proselytization work under guise of helping in development. There are still other organisations who are genuinely concerned with the unjust situation in the world and they try to help bring about changes both within their own societies. There are quite a large number of such national groups all over the world to whom the message I have given you is very meaningful. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka has already come into partnership with several such organisations and with whom they are trying to promote the above mentioned common ideals of a New World Order.

There is a negative aspect that seems to be developing in some good International Development Co-operation Organisations. That is the disproportionate professionalism growing in them on the same lines as Multi-national Companies. They are becoming too technocratic and less spiritually motivated. This tendency can be checked only by influencing them with the non-violent values which motivate groups like us. In May this year, *The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* will be having its second International Conference in the Netherlands, on the theme '*Sarvodaya and World Development*'. The main stress of this conference will be the application of Sarvodaya values to industrial societies. This conference will be a forum to further extend the ideas at a world level what I have been expressing in the first two lectures. To give it an organisational status we will be founding *A Sarvodaya Shramadana International*.

If you listened to me carefully you would have realised that quite independently of governments we have succeeded in spreading certain ideas, technologies, and built an institutional form along the world view that I have been trying to explain to you during these three days. This was possible because we kept out of power politics and all other forms of violent activities. *Gandhiji's* path of gentle persuasion through developing processes which we defined as awakening processes was the line we followed.

You may ask me how are we going to deal with all sorts of violent unjust national and international situations and structures which are much more powerful than the institutions that we have

talked about which are based on nobler values. I have no answer to give you except to say let us continue with greater insight and dedication on the path we have carved out on our convictions and understanding. Laws of nature and laws of human life are bound to favour our efforts more than the power of those organisations. This is where we should have *Shradda* or Faith with understanding on the teachings of the Buddha which I repeat:

“Within this fathom long body, equipped with mind and sense perception, O Monks I declare unto you, the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path to its cessation

Everything has to come to an end. So is this lecture series of mine and the dialogue we have been having for the last three days. I am grateful that the Peace Research Centre gave me this honour of speaking to you. I am grateful for the hospitality and affection I received from all of you. I am grateful for the patience you had with me. I finally thank the Vice-Chancellor who presided at all these meetings, last but not least, Professor Ramlal Parikh who was instrumental in persuading me to come here. I wish you all long life, and good health to continue with your Mission of Peace, and well-being for all in this world

*Dukkhapphthacha Niddhukkha*

*Bhyappaththacha Nibbaya*

*Sokappaththacha Nissoka*

*Honthu Sabbepi Panino*

“May those who suffer overcome their suffering,  
May those who are in fear overcome their fear,  
May those who are sorrowful overcome their sorrow,  
May the entire living World be well and happy”.

## A NEW TRAIL OF ENLIGHTENMENT

This evening I stand before you here having accepted a dual responsibility. Firstly, by conferring on me an honorary degree the Senate and the Council of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura have given me an academic recognition. Secondly, by inviting me to deliver the Convocation Address I have been given the opportunity to make my first contribution to the academic community of my country. I accept both these responsibilities with humility and with full awareness of my academic limitations. Being a past student of this University this is a moment of special joy for me and I express my sincere and grateful thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, the members of the Senate and the Council for their kindness.

It is not my intention to deliver a lengthy and scholarly convocation address. My academic status is only a few minutes old. Yet, I like to share with you some of my thoughts about the educational process and University Education in particular at this particular moment in the history of our country.

Sri Lanka like many other so called third world countries is entering an industrial era. On the other hand, the industrialized countries have entered a post-industrial era which they might in time to come name the Solar Age. In spite of the differences in consumption levels and production technologies, both these worlds are linked together in almost every respect be it in economic, political, or cultural relationships. In the modern world no country can be an island of its own. No longer can we have a world view or development paradigm exclusively for our own use. What ever we plan for ourselves will have to be done from the perspective of a new world order.

The old world order is crumbling down. The creation of material wealth for an endless portfolio artificially created wants has been the predominant trend during the last several decades. Use of renewable energy resources was replaced by an increasing use of non-renewable energy resources. The high energy consumption patterns of production, transportation, and

consumption have brought humanity face to face with a dangerous situation unprecedented in the history of mankind. Realization is dawning on man that Nature does not provide him with boundless resources, and on the contrary has to live within the bounds of Nature. It is on this realization that the future patterns of living, systems of production, distribution and consumption, and the content and processes of education have to be decided upon.

During the 18th century when Adam Smith wrote his "Wealth of Nations" he was struck by the tremendous gain in productivity which resulted from the minute division and specialization of labour. This specialization has today reached very high levels in every field of human thought and activity including education.

I am not over-emphasizing when I say that even in the world of education we have reached over-specialization to the extent of overlooking the fundamental integral unity within man himself and which has alienated him from other human beings, from the scientific and technological processes which are taking place around him, and from nature as a whole. No wonder that man is not at peace within himself, with his fellow-men and with his natural and institutionalised environment. The consequence of this type of fragmentation of the human personality is best seen in those societies which have reached the highest levels of science and technology. They have inherited a myriad of evils such as environmental pollution, ecological imbalances, diseases of affluence such as psychological disturbances, heart ailments and cancers, disintegration of families and an eternal threat of an accidental or premeditated nuclear holocaust.

As a result of the historical forces operating in the last four centuries, we, in Sri Lanka were also brought into the orbit of this shaky world order. The industrialization processes which are introduced to our country also appear to be based on the same false foundations that placed the western nations on their present perilous plight. It seems to me therefore, that the most crucial challenge that our educational establishments and the university academic community in particular faces is the discovery of paradigm of development that we should follow in this country.

Are we going to accept the western paradigm of growth centered development? Are we going to be led by endless

materialistic greed rather than by well-thought out basic needs of our people? Are we going to adopt the high energy consuming technology for our production and consumption needs? Are we going to accept the economic theories based on a fragmentary view of the so-called classical factors of production which the western economists named land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurship, without taking into consideration a totally different world view? Are we going to accept the present theories of employment divorced from what traditionally we accepted as Right Livelihood? In my opinion, these are the basic questions that our community as a whole, under the academic leadership of the Universities have to explore into. If we succeed we may open new and relevant realms of knowledge on which human survival would depend in the decades to come.

This brings me to draw your attention to the world view that we inherited from the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

I believe our education should be founded primarily on the understanding of man himself. My numerous contacts with University students and teachers in many other countries of the world have compelled them to come to the conclusion that the Personality Awakening of the human being should be given the foremost place at all levels of education. I very often equate the learning process to the awakening of insight of man symbolized by Lord Buddha's words *Chakkun Udapadi* and acquisition of knowledge to *Nanan Udapadi*. I consider these to be two stages preceding education which really should begin with *Panna Udapadi* or awakening of wisdom. When wisdom is awakened man would look for the science of liberation from an unsatisfactory situation which may be symbolized by the Buddha's words of *Vijja Udapadi*. The culmination of the processes of learning, knowledge, wisdom, and science is the final liberation from all darkness to light or *Aloko Udapadi*. Can't we re-establish our foundations of education based on a goal oriented value sub-structure and a rational ideological framework of this nature?

An acceptance of such an educational philosophy will motivate us to begin the creation of an environment conducive to total human development from the very inception of human life in a mother's womb or at conception itself. The identification of the

fact that human personality is a temporary coming together of mind- body (Nama Rupa) combination, which can be further analyzed into the aggregates of sensation (*Vedana*) perception (*Sanna*), volitional activities (*Sankhara*) consciousness (*Vinnana*) and the four great elements of the qualities of hardness (*Patavi*), fluidity (*Apo*), heat (*Thejo*), and motion (*Vayo*) give us an excellent scientific foundation to begin an educational restructuring process.

The awakening of the human personality within this realistic basis and framework can take place continuously provided the various specialized disciplines in education, science and technology are reorganised to facilitate the provision of environmental and material needs. The release of processes for the satisfaction of these needs is the function of any sensible development planning and programming exercise. In other words, the philosophy and practice of education and development should merge at this ideological level as well as at the operational levels of technologies and structures in society. This is not happening today. We are all living in different worlds that we have created for ourselves on very convenient and narrow considerations for short term survival. What we need now for the new world order we have to create is a more stable vision which begins with ourselves but on an entirely different dimension.

We should without fear or hesitation reject the western paradigm of development because it has not led even those societies into happiness and contentment. The world simply does not have sufficient resources to provide all nations with the same consumption level such as those found in western societies. Neither can they themselves sustain it even for another decade. Let us reject this paradigm unceremoniously. 225 Million Americans are said to consume as much non-renewable energy as is sufficient for 225 billion individuals!

Then where does hope lie? I believe that hope lies in working out a development program based on the real needs of our people that could be satisfied with our own available national resources including a science and technology which is our own and appropriate to our own realities. This cannot be realized unless we reject the economic science based on the four classical factors of production and we revert to our broader world outlook based on

our own factors of progress, namely, Nature, the Total Human Personality, Social Capital and Knowledge. I believe that a theoretical framework of the art and science of combining these factors of progress should be worked out consciously by the academic community of our Universities. That is the real challenge that the Universities and other higher educational institutions face today.

You may think that this challenge is highly revolutionary and is sometimes not realizable in practice. If this is so, I plead with you to think of the consequences of accepting the present world order as it is. Project the present situation into the next couple of decades with all optimism, and the consequences you can deduce from that experience will be disastrous. On the other hand, I am not asking you to be pessimistic. I am only asking you to be realistic. We have all the potential in this country to build up a happy and contented society if we set before us a goal of balanced development within our resources and skills without being caught in the stream of irreversible western patterns of development which is intrinsically materialistic and violent.

To my knowledge there is no other country in the world besides Sri Lanka which can take the initiative in this most challenging task. As a nation we possess a dynamic world view with a long history behind it but which is most modern compared to the modern discoveries of science. We just launched upon the industrialization process but we can still change its direction and make it viable before it gathers a self-propelling momentum which would be difficult to check. The vast majority of our people are still a value-oriented community and they are amenable to sincere leadership and reason. What restraints us seems to be our reluctance to think anew and to act with courage.

May I conclude this brief address on a note of appeal to the teachers and students of this University. There is no more opportune and critical moment than now for a radically different intellectual breakthrough for the building up of a new world order. Please accept that challenge with courage and freshness of outlook and blaze a new trail of enlightenment for our nation and the world.

## **ON SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT - LESSONS FROM SARVODAYA - A BUDDHIST INSPIRED MOVEMENT FOR UNIVERSAL AWAKENING**

Sarvodaya was born in 1958. At that time it was thought that a strategy for the development of our villages was necessary because the island comprised about 23,000 such villages. As a consequence a group of us decided to spend our time in a group of such villages inhabited predominantly by economically and socially disadvantaged communities of people. In a way we were motivated by the sense of a social justice and a yearning desire to search for our own roots.

This country had been the cradle of Buddhism for over 2500 years. It was in our villages that the Buddhist way of life flourished. We were in search of this way - pattern of life which gave the people of our country a happy and a contented society where the basic needs of the majority were satisfied.

The Buddha is the Awakened One. The Buddha's message was directed at the awakening of all which leads to the good of the many, the well-being of the many. The basis of awakening was found in the four Brahma Viharana-Metta, Karuna, Muditha, and Upekkha. These were the simple principles of Buddhism that forged the life of communities in the past and made the life pleasant and enjoyable. These principles awakened them in the past contributing a tremendous difference to their personalities.

Sociologically speaking these four principles of Personality Awakening had their own objectives. Metta or loving kindness, for example, became the thought that motivated people to work with friendliness and respect for life. Human dignity was emphasised here together with the respect for all other forms of life including flora and fauna, thus not forgetting the balance between man and his ecology.

Karuna was compassion that motivates one to action, which removes the causes which create suffering, grief, and fear. Muditha was the sympathetic joy that resulted in participating in work that made other people happy. Equanimity is the long-term

result of the above three principles; the frame of mind of a person who practises the above three principles would be one unshaken either by gain or by loss. In Buddhist terms his mind would be like a massive stone that cannot be shaken by winds from four quarters, the winds symbolizing losses as well as gains.

In the simple life of the people we discovered that these four principles could lead to a fundamental development of the personality. In Buddhism these principles have been explained as "excellent or sublime, because they are the right or ideal, way of conduct towards living beings. They are the great removers of tension, the great peace makers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence. They are called Abodes (vihara) because they should become minds' constant dwelling places where our minds feel 'at home', they should not remain merely places of rare and short visits, soon forgotten" (see Ven. Nyanaponika Thero, the Four Sublime States, Brahma Vihara, Kandy Buddhist Publication Society, 1972, P 1-2).

The awakening of the Personality had to be parallel with the awakening of the Group, in this case the village. Group awakening is conceived in different stages. As we initially worked in the village, for us, the immediate group was the village community. In the past this community was grouped according to Gramas, a cohesive group which shared a common pattern of life. We called this the village awakening, Gramodaya. Thereafter as our activities developed we moved on to urban or semi-urban areas. Here the community was not identical with that we encountered in the villages. The urbanised or semi-urbanised community had its own pattern of life, its ideals, values, and even the social structure. Different strategies were necessary to awaken them. The awakening of the urban dweller as a community was known as Nagarodaya.

As the country comprises of towns and villages, the awakening of these communities would inevitably result in the awakening of the entire land- Deshodaya. People in the land would arise, regardless of caste, creed, race, political ideologies or any other divisive factors, and this awakening is the prelude to such a world wide awakening in all parts of the globe which we call Vishvodaya. It may appear only as an ideal but in Sarvodaya we have a fervent belief that our ideals are practicable. It is this that had sustained us in the past and that will sustain us in the future.

For the awakening of groups again we found that there are four principles which we could borrow from Buddhism. Actually it is not through borrowing from Buddhist texts did we come across these principles. No doubt they were known to us from Buddhist books. But it was when we began working in the village did we discover that these principles, were actually put into practice by our simple folk. In the agricultural way of life they practised the foundation was laid on these principles.

It is this discovery we made in our contact with them. The great inspiration and guidance our people had from Buddhism not in a doctrinaire sense but in a practical sense where in their day to day life these principles played a practical role.

In group awakening there was Dana or sharing, pleasant language, (*priya vacana*), constructive work (*artha charya*) and equality (*samanatmata*) which led to spontaneity and mutual co-operation.

Village life or community life as experienced by us was based on these principles. They practised agriculture and shared the water from the tank. All activity in the village was based on sharing not only their food but also time, energy, knowledge and whatever that was available to them. When the field was cultivated all the villagers helped one another. They called this *shramadana* or sharing of labour, energy, time and knowledge. We found that these *shramadana* techniques could be developed by us in order to forge a community whose individual development as well as community development or awakening could be envisaged.

*Shramadana* as well as family gatherings were strategies that were existent in our rural society.. It was usual for all the families in the village to gather together at least on the full-moon days and talk about their common problems. In the case of individual families, it was the common practice to gather at least once probably in the evening in order to perform the religious rituals. These were rediscovered by Sarvodaya as suitable strategies to awaken both the individual and the community.

In our experience with rural people we found that Buddhist way of looking at problems helped us to devise strategies to deal with the economic and social problems in the village. Buddhism has the Four Noble Truths and these Four Noble Truths gave us a

formula to apply in the case of the village. First there is suffering, then there is the cause for suffering, this cause can be removed and then there is a Path that leads to the cessation of suffering; and finally there is total personality and community awakening or development that comes with total emancipation.

The suffering in the sense of the rural or urban community is symbolised in the decadent village or town where egoism reigns where possession, competition, hatred, harsh speech, destructive action and inequality are rampant. One has to understand and become aware of this truth. What are the causes of this state of things? The second truth explains that it is due to ignorance (avidya) that is ensconced in disunity, oppression, disease, poverty and stagnation. This ignorance can be removed by following a path of awareness building and awakening. There is a path that leads us to deliverance this ignorance. The fourth truth explains what that path is. The principles of individual and community awakening motivated by Sarvodaya thoughts and organised action comprise this path. It brings spiritual, moral, cultural, economic, social and political development through goal oriented action and organisational development.

Finally the individual and groups together move towards the realization of Sarvodaya society where equality, sharing constructive activity, co-operation, pleasant speech and love as well as freedom prevail. It is a society where everyone's basic needs are satisfied and none exploits another.

What strategy is there to achieve this society? Sarvodaya has borrowed the concept of non-violent revolution from Buddhism. A revolution is possible and desirable. But it should first take place in the hearts and minds of people. Change in society comes from the bottom of the heart and not through any outside force. The revolution is for sustaining life and not for destroying it.

The foremost tool in Sarvodaya's armoury is shramadana which is the place where both the physical and psychological requirements are fulfilled for every individual to imbibe these qualities in him. Metta or loving kindness for example is interpreted as the thought that motivates one to work with friendliness towards all and respect for all life.

Karuna or compassion is that which leads one to help others to

overcome fear, suffering and hate either in a small or a big way. Muditha is the happiness of mind one gets when others are happy in a Shramadana Camp. Upekkha is the state of mind one reaches having realized the nature of everyday problems. The mind reaches a balanced stage where one is not affected by sorrow or joy and learns "to treat the two impostors the same".

In the shramadana camp one shares his labour and skills with others. This sharing is extended to time, energy, knowledge, power, and wealth. Dana in the Buddhist sense is the first one of the ten perfections that a would-be Buddha (a Bodhisatva) is expected to fulfil. In the shramadana camp pleasant language is used to address each other. Priyavacana is the second Buddhist Principle of social behaviour. "By working together to reclaim a water tank or cut an access road, by putting up a community building or village school, the shramadana family realizes 'constructive activity', the third principle of Buddhist social behaviour. Sharing the same food, enjoying the same facilities which makes no distinction between man and man, the fourth principle of Buddhist social behaviour is put into practice.

The shramadana camp with its song, dance, work, meditation and study is expected to render three major benefits.

1. The provision of a first hand opportunity for rural and urban groups to meet in a beneficial manner, thus bringing about mutual understanding and confidence in the achievements of common goals.
2. After generations of inaction and dependence the rural communities are stimulated into a new life of self-reliance and self help to improve their conditions.
3. The emergence of a new rural leadership which is not split by caste, race, religion or political commitment but which has been trained for a new development.

The best lesson learnt by us in our work with the people is the fact that human beings are everywhere the same and distinction as to race, caste, creed, colour etc. forms no part in a plan of development based on the Buddhist value system. Secondly we learnt that all those persons and ideologies that lead to division in man whether the division is infinitesimal or great, are in no way conducive to development. Whatever ideology that preaches

division has to be recognised as such and dealt with as such. Hatred or violence in which ever form it is introduced is not of any significant value to man. It destroys all what is good, constructive and creative. Therefore preached either in word or action it has to cease and instead love or compassion should function. Finally in all plans for Survival and Development what matters is what the people think and feel. Therefore these have to be conceived by the people's point of view. What do they understand by Survival and Development? They are the people who should decide, effect and enjoy the fruits of development. Their participation is absolutely necessary and without it no Survival or Development is possible. All Sarvodaya strategies fashioned from our rural culture are based on the participation of the people in decision-making and decision- effecting processes.

What Sarvodaya has learnt from Buddhist experience transcends all cultures and countries. As Buddhism is a religion for human beings the lessons learned are common to the entire world. They have come within our experience when we began to work with the people. We learned it from them. They are what made them happy and contented in the past. The principles although accidentally learned from them are in actual fact not the legacy of any race, caste or creed. Buddhism has preached them for the happiness of the many, good of the many. Therefore these principles could be applied by any country regardless of the creed they perform or their political ideology.

Our lessons of Sarvodaya, which we have learned from Buddhism and for which we are greatly indebted to our teachers, the rustic villagers of Sri Lanka among whom these principles function in simple practice, could serve as a beacon light to any community or country that desires to fashion their life accordingly. We believe that the greatness of man lies in realising his potential to his highest and for us the awakening of man, individually and collectively is the only practicable way to achieve it.

## THE ART OF HEALING HUMANITY

As a parent, as a lover of humanity, as a friend of the Philippines, as a man who has great hopes in youth for the future of humanity, I am overjoyed to see the beaming and beautiful faces of 101 of you who are graduating today and going into the broad world to serve humanity. Therefore I'd like to thank the Board of Trustees and the Faculty of the Aguinaldo College of Medicine for inviting me today to speak to you a few words of inspiration.

When we look back to the history of our countries, we know that before independence we had great men who dedicated and sacrificed their lives to win freedom for us which all of us enjoy today. After independence, then again, we had great men who sacrificed their lives to achieve a better quality of life for our people. I believe that in all the developing countries now, a third age, a third era, has dawned. We are in a world where three decades of development have not brought about any significant results. Our poor brothers and sisters, the vast majority of people in our countries, are still in a state of abject poverty and powerlessness. Every minute there are twenty eight people, we are told, who are dying with causes related to malnutrition. There is hardly any country, among the poorer countries on this earth, where people are not fighting their own people, and lives are not lost meaninglessly every day. We are living in a world of that nature-divided, alienated, exploited and tormented. In such a world no human being worth that name should possess very narrow ideas. We should have the highest possible ideals at a demanding and a challenging time like this. The greatest in a human being generally comes up when he is faced with the greatest challenges.

Today, we are living in a world where no national or international leaders can solve problems. We need millions and millions of leaders, in very nook and corner of our countries if we are to build up a human society where people will live in peace with their basic needs satisfied and which we can call a no-poverty

society. This is where those of us who have had access to higher education have a special obligation and a responsibility. How many of us in the human family have the capacity or the opportunity to reach the level of education and attainments in knowledge which you have reached today? When you look at the world today, as young doctors you have two alternative choices before you. You can think only of yourself and have endless, inordinate greed to guide you. We know that greed, when organized can create aversion and hatred. Greed and hatred together can organize and sustain ignorance. When greed, hatred and ignorance are thus combined and utilized in a world where science and technology are dominant, the result can be chaos. On the other hand, all of us have non-greed within us. We have a lot of beneficence within us. We should share whatever we have with others. We have lots of love within us. We have lots of enlightenment within us. Imagine, if we can harness these noble qualities, what a tremendous force we can generate? What a contented and peaceful world could we create? We have doctors who have by their selfish action and practices organized greed. On the other hand we have doctors who have organized beneficence by their gracious qualities of sharing and compassion. Into which category are you going to fall? This is the best time for you to make your choice.

Today, in a world where science and technology dominate the highest knowledge that man has gained is used in a selfish and irrational way for the benefit of a few. You have the unique opportunity to bring that knowledge down to the people. This is a very good opportunity to place before ourselves such an ideal - dedicating ourselves to achieve an objective of this nature-the ideal of helping all, the ideal of awakening of all, the ideal of trying to embrace the entire humanity in your mind and heart.

When a doctor fills his heart with compassion, then such a person emits a certain radiant thought - wave. Noble thoughts thus emanating have a very great therapeutic value for the poor patient, who is waiting till the doctor appears. When you dispense medicine or when you speak a kind word to a person who is eagerly expecting your help, that is compassionate action which touches his heart. Compassion combined with compassionate action will give you a tremendous joy. This joy cannot be

measured in monetary or such other terms. Can a mother measure the joy of seeing the smile of her little baby in her arms? It is such a joy you must learn to possess. Such a joy, when accumulated, gives certain equilibrium to our mind. Your heart grows larger and you are possessed with a strength to face loss or gain with a detached mind. Equanimity then possesses your inner being, and that is the type of human being we need in the world today.

We are trying to build up our countries on the Western paradigm. We thought that the Western World was developed. We thought that the Western World was affluent. I am just returning, after spending five weeks in the most affluent society that the world has yet seen. What did I see there? Pockets of poverty-what you may call a Third World in the heart of an affluent society, where some families even do not have proper water and sanitation facilities. We should not think of the so-called affluent societies as our models. Third Worlds and Fourth Worlds are there right inside those societies. These societies now have 15% or so who are unemployed. Even medical graduates are becoming unemployed now. Therefore, we have to think differently now. We have to give up our colonial mentality. Are we going to those affluent societies in search of wealth, emulating their goals of life or are we going in search of the poor societies in our own countries and derive that joy of living by dedicated service to our own poor brothers and sisters? This is a decision we all have to make at this particular time in the history of our nations.

Our educated people, our rich people, our clever people, should go to those places where poor people live to bring them solace and joy. Ideological and other differences have torn our people apart. First they get divided mentally. When you get mentally divided due to various factors, it may be caste like in India, it may be class, it may be religion, it may be language or a political ideology, then you come to the next stage of developing some sort of prejudice, some sort of aversion in your minds which lead to the third stage where one man or a group of people begin to fear or hate other men. Now these three forces, force of division, force of aversion and force of fear or hatred build themselves into a psychology, a philosophy, an ideology, a social objective, where a group of people begin to think that another group of people are their inherent enemies. Where does this organized ignorance lead

to? It does lead to a situation in this world where every single man, woman and child is threatened by violence. Two hundred tons of TNT are stored by great powers for every single one of us in this world. It is said that they have the devastating capacity to destroy this earth 20 times and more. That is the world in which we are living today. If we are to prevent this catastrophe taking place, a great change in our hearts, a radical transformation in our consciousness has to take place. Lord Jesus Christ said, "We have to lose ourselves to find ourselves completely". "We have to overcome our ego". Lord Buddha said "If we can overcome our ego, then only we can find out the truth, the true joy in life". You have to provide leadership to such a course of action dedicated for the service of man in the world today.

Your work should not be confined only to finding out the cause of a disease and then trying to provide the necessary medicaments to appease or control it. You have to remove the root causes of the disease. When you think of the Philippines, I'm sure that at least 80% of the causes of disease are preventable. Thinking of your country and my country, I must say our countries are leading in the incidence of certain diseases. Let us take up the challenge. Let us eradicate them at their very roots. This can be done and the beginning of this eradication is a change in our value system, our attitudes, and in our mental make-up. "I am a human being because I realize that I have such potential greatness in me. An animal cannot get the entire living world into its mind and/or its heart as I can. Only a human mind can embrace the entire living world. I am a human being with a human mind. And this human consciousness can be raised to a universal level". Learn to think like that.

After the industrial revolution, we all had to realize that science neglected one part of our brain.. It neglected the intuitive part of the brain, it neglected the part that "contained" wisdom. Only that measurable empirical part of the brain was developed. The result is that the people began to crave for fame, money, power and knowledge. All these things lead to the inevitable destruction of man. That is why, today we have the privilege of developing both sides of the brain, both knowledge and reason, spirituality and love, intuition and insight. That sort of force was not earlier recognised by science.

Today, scientists even Nobel Laureates in Physics are talking about the importance and the inter-relatedness of human consciousness. We need a force that can rebuild the universal consciousness where human beings at every level begin to think not about acquisition but more about brotherhood and sharing. That is indeed a new world we have to build. Everybody in the present society has to give a leadership in this direction in order to make this ideal a success. That is the only direction in which the world has to proceed if we are to stop a nuclear catastrophe or total pollution of the environment where unknowingly all of us are subjected to a gradual toxic poisoning throughout the world. Therefore dear brothers and sisters, who are graduating today, I am not talking to you as an outsider, but as a man from a friendly country, as a person who believes in a very great future for you and for all mankind. Those of us in Asia who inherited all world religions have to give leadership to the whole of humanity. I have been to many countries and I have met leaders of those countries, both at a national level and at rural and community level. The more I see them and the more I talk to them, the more I begin to believe that we who are in Asia have to give a leadership and this leadership has to be founded on the harmonization of science and spirituality - A happy union of reason and intuition.

What greater profession is there than that of yours which bring these together? Can you practise your profession without love? You cannot; when a mother lulls her baby to sleep, and then falls asleep near the baby, she wakes up when the baby cries, and feeds the baby. When again the mother is about to fall asleep, the baby cries again. The mother goes on and on the whole night through without proper sleep. In the morning she gets up and goes about the work as if she has had a long and sound sleep. The secret of her strength is the great love she has for the baby.

Next to a mother, it is only a doctor who can tax himself in like manner. Those doctors who have this love as their motivating force receiving inspiration and guidance from it and who have the knowledge to put that love into concrete action, are the doctors worth the name. After all, the greatest virtue a human being can have is respect for life and it is you who try to save life. Whenever you dispense to the patient it is not only the patient who derives joy every moment. Your personality is enriched by the joy you get

in helping to lessen the pain of another. You begin to see something divine within you; you see a spiritual awakening within you and that spiritual awakening will never let you down. In all your life, it would sustain you guiding and inspiring you, providing you with strength when you need it. It will take you to greater and greater heights, which people who have vicious and less worthwhile goals will never achieve in all their life here.

This is the message I have to give on this occasion to you young Graduates who are on the threshold of a great and noble career. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, President and members of the Faculty, I would like to thank you very sincerely for deciding to confer this honorary doctorate on me. I do not really understand whether I deserve all this. Very often I have been thinking as a man who is not interested in power, position or even a good name or fame. Why I receive so much of love, so much fraternity and much of affection I believe is because of the great humanity that is in you. This will make me more humble. This will sustain me with more courage. This will provide me more inspiration to continue my work in going in search of those who are the lowest, the lowliest and the lost in society and give them the real hope of a new world.

May I wish all of you very good health and great strength of mind to build up a noble world within our life-time, so that no man on this earth is hungry or nobody on this earth is angry. Thank you very much.

## VISHVODAYA THROUGH VISHVADANA

May it please,  
Your Majesties, the King of Belgium, and Queen Fabiola,  
Your Royal Highness Prince Albert, Princess Paola,  
Hon. The Prime Minister,  
Hon. Ministers and Members of Parliament.  
Chairman and Board of Directors of the King Baudouin  
Foundation,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with a deep sense of humility and renewed faith in the goodness of humanity that I stand before you in this August assembly to accept the King Baudouin International Development Prize.

I consider this to be an occasion where honour and recognition are being bestowed by the Foundation upon all those humble or prudent individuals and groups who have accepted the Sarvodaya Thought and pursued the Shramadana Action to build up a more human society. Therefore, this memorable occasion is a moment of joy not only for me but equally also for several thousands of brothers and sisters who tread the Sarvodaya path. On behalf of all of them ranging from the humblest people in the backwoods of Sri Lanka to discerning people of advanced societies who gave them fraternal cooperation, I wish to thank the Foundation most sincerely for selecting me to receive this prestigious award.

In the words of my Supreme Teacher The Reverend Gautama Buddha, who dwelt in North India during the Sixth Century B.C.

*“Manopubbangama dhamma  
Manosettha manomaya  
Manasa ce padutthena  
bhasati va karoti va  
Tato nam dukkhamanveti  
cakkam va vahato padam”.*

The meaning of this Pali stanza is:

“Mind is the forerunner or (all evil) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught - ox”.

Then the Exalted One continues with a second stanza:

*“Manopubbangama dhamma  
Manosettha manomaya  
Manasa ce pasannena  
bhasati va karoti va  
Tato nam sukhamanveti  
Chaya’va anapayini”.*

which means-

“mind is the forerunner of (all good) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one’s shadow that never leaves.”

The lesson we learn from this teaching is that if we can put our mental faculties right then everything else in the world would be put right.

Looking at our human society dispassionately, you will bear with me when I say that in spite of the great affluence and marvels of science we see around us, most human beings are unhappy. Some do suffer due to their excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the senses. Others suffer because they lack the basic needs of a decent life. Yet others suffer due to hierarchical violence imposed upon them by the way their societies are structured or from wars and strife imposed upon them by opposing religious, ethnic, or ideological confederates.

The governments of the world have generally failed to show a way out of this sad impasse. But governments are formed of human beings. If governments have failed then we have to acknowledge that as human beings there is much for us to do. If we are to succeed in our endeavour we have no choice but to accept the importance of re-building man, his immediate family,

his community and probably his whole environment. This is a great and difficult task fraught with immense challenges but I do believe that there is no easier way.

Such a human re-construction effort has to be sustained locally as well as globally in its thought as well as its practice. The motivation for such an endeavour has to be derived from very powerful reflection relevant to the times we are living in. It should have a unique appeal to the affluent and the deprived in our world so that together they may search for and march towards a common goal of real happiness.

The supreme thought that we have chosen in order to march towards that happiness is Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya is a word coined by Mahatma Gandhi. 'Sarva' means All; "Udaya" means Awakening. Therefore Sarvodaya means the Awakening of All- the awakening of the entire humanity as individuals, families, rural and urban communities, national societies and as inhabitants of the one and only planet in which all of us live.

What is awakening? If I apply it to myself, the human being, it is a three dimensional integrated process that should take place in my personality.

Firstly, I must continuously awaken myself to the real nature of my own psycho- physical entity called my personality. Who am I? What is the path leading to my supreme happiness? Is it through increased greed, hatred and ignorance within me that I can find happiness or is it through a process of gradual decrease in these threefold defilements?

Secondly, how do I awaken to the realities of society with all its complexities? What should be the nature of the moral, cultural, social, political and economic environment which will help me to awaken my personality to the fullest?

Thirdly, how do I awaken myself to the realities of my natural environment consisting as it does of land, water, air and sunshine and various living beings including the plant kingdom?

If I succeed in getting my personality to awaken in this three-fold dimension then I believe that I am on the path to happiness which will help my inner life to be in harmony with the outer world.

The acceptance of the thought of awakening of all or Sarvodaya motivates one to work not only for one's personal well-being but also for the well-being of all other human beings. It even extends further. One has to safeguard the purity, survival and sustenance of one's environment. Truth, Non-violence and Self-denial become living tenets in such a person's life.

Why do we as individuals need such an unassailable value system? Because we need strong personalities in the world guided by such value systems if we are to develop the sense of faith needed to survive as a species on this planet. We have always to remember that we are living in a world where greed in man is manifested in wide-spread extremes of poverty, hunger, squalor and disease, where suspicion and hatred among nations are manifested in the swelling stockpiles of armaments in rich and poor countries alike and where organised ignorance is manifested by the mountains of propaganda and counter propaganda material distributed the world over in order to force one's sectarian views down the throats of others.

The type of human being we need for the world today is one which has the courage to reject these dreadful systems of organised evil which have made us decivilized; we need the type of leadership which will strive to re-build a new man who has the strength of character to harness the good that is in all of us. This new man in turn shall re-build our human society and a new human civilization on more abiding values.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is determined to build a new man and a new society. In Sri Lanka we started this process by enabling human beings to come together to share their time, thought and energy for the awakening of a process of sharing which is called Shramadana.

We selected several of the poorest of the poor villages in Sri Lanka and while living and working with the villagers, together we evolved a series of concepts and a methodology to improve their quality of life by their own efforts. Self Reliance, Community Participation and a Planned Programme to satisfy their basic human and community needs were three important ingredients in this self-development process.

Sarvodaya defines development as an awakening process. An

ever increasing accumulation of goods and services created to feed greed in man is not development. On the contrary development is an awakening process taking place within individuals, families and communities in which their needs are first satisfied without polluting the mind, poisoning the body, destroying the ecological balance, violating the cultural boundaries, widening prevailing disparities or demeaning human nature.

Development in a true sense should enrich people both materially and spiritually so qualities of sharing, brotherhood and peace ennoble all people.

The Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka has grown in stature in its 25 years of existence. The participation in its programmes of thousands of people from all walks of life and from all parts of the world has enabled it to attain its present strength. Today the movement is active in over 5000 villages in Sri Lanka alone. People in these Sri Lankan villages belong to different religious, ethnic, linguistic and political groups.

Building a Nation is Building its People. People mean infants, children, youth, mothers, farmers, workers, elders and other adults. Nobody can be excluded, not even the infirm and the disabled. Sarvodaya has designed a development process so that all categories of people are enabled to participate meaningfully in their own development.

Nearly five thousand nurseries for pre-school children, over 300 village re-awakening and co-ordinating centres, 24 district development education institutes, several agricultural and rural technical services centres, and over 3000 shramadana camps organised every year, and conducted by the movement as a living and growing experience in its endeavour to build a new man and a new society.

A common characteristic of all these programmes is their indigenous spirituo-cultural base on the one hand and their international dimension for universal application on the other.

The Sarvodaya effort has inspired and encouraged governmental and many non-governmental institutions to adopt several of its concepts and programmes in the services of the nation. Similarly the Sarvodaya message and services have reached many countries both rich and poor because of its

universal validity.

I first came to Belgium in the late nineteen sixties. At that time I was surprised at the poor level of understanding of the so-called third-world problems and the indifference displayed towards these even by people who could claim to be educated.

I remember the days and late evenings I spent with communities in Belgium beginning with the village Balen, and then Meerhout and Zelzate and later with many others to explain the importance for the peoples of our countries to establish communication links of their own so that one day there could be a dialogue on problems we face in each other's situations and the ways and means of helping each other to find solutions to those problems. The day the first village link-up programme was established between Balen in Belgium and Halmillawewa in Sri Lanka, that was a historic day of joy for me. I was very much moved when I came to learn that I was nominated for this award by one of those pioneers in Balen Mr. Jef Sleencks who is now a Member of Parliament. Today we have over forty such links in Belgium. The Netherlands, West Germany and Canada followed suit immediately after.

I must mention here with a sense of gratitude the contribution made by the people of Belgium through the National Centrum of the 11-11-11 campaign and the World Assembly of Youth towards the promotion of our Movement. This was the first ever international contribution our Movement received. Later NOVIB of the Netherlands, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung of West Germany, Helvetas in Switzerland, OXFAM (U.K), OXFAM (Canada), OXFAM (America), World University Service (Canada), International NGO Division of CIDA (Canada), NORAD (Norway), UNICEF, WHO, ATI (Washington), HKI (U.S.A.) IDRC (Canada), Ford Foundation, DANIDA (Denmark) and ITDG (U.K.) and several other individuals and groups helped the Movement at various stages to reach its present level of development and credibility.

On this historic occasion it is equally fitting that I should refer to the Belgian youths who came to Sri Lanka and worked for the Movement and participated in its activities. They blazed a new trail in international development co-operation where the need for building psychological bridges between our countries was

recognised. Today volunteers from over 30 different countries are working shoulder to shoulder with our workers in the Movement.

With this ceremony at which I receive the King Baudouin Award for International Development in the presence of Your Majesties our mutual concern for the people of our two countries and our commitment for a new world order are further cemented and strengthened.

In our Sarvodaya terminology I wish to call such a friendship 'Vishvadana' which means Universal Sharing. If in your country people suffer due to the ill-effects of an over industrialized technological civilization such a situation should become the concern of us in Sri Lanka too. By the same token if people in my country suffer due to an international system of economic or political exploitation such a situation would no doubt receive your concern too. With mutual respect and understanding we should be able to help each other to overcome our problems by a process of universal sharing.

I do not like the world aid in vogue today. It has a connotation which demeans the giver as well as the receiver. On the other hand a process of sharing the best in our Cultures for the mutual benefit of human awakening towards peace and happiness ennobles both parties. No country in the world could lay claim to what they have achieved as the outcome of their own exclusive endeavour.

Universal Sharing or Vishvadana should invariably lead to Universal Awakening or Vishvodaya. Universal Awakening is not a distant or illusory ideal. It is with you and me here and now.

What we call 'I' is only a continuously changing phenomenon of the five aggregates, namely, of form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. These make up the sum total of all human existence. We should not pre-suppose that there is an 'I' as distinct and separate from the 'world'. In reality 'I' and 'world' are part of the experience which arises because of consciousness. Through mindfulness of the arising of phenomena we can liberate ourselves from the illusory conjuring of the mind.

The first, second, third and even fourth worlds of which we are talking are all illusions of our mind. Apart from our consciousness, these worlds do not exist. Therefore let us look at our own minds and try to observe how universal we are. The more

I develop a universal consciousness, to that extent I am free. Only true freedom leads to true happiness.

Universal consciousness awakening - Vishvodaya - and universal sharing - Vishvadana - have to develop and progress hand in hand. The one cannot develop without the other. Without progress in both there will never be an end to suffering, suspicion, exploitation, strife, wars and misery.

Let us not wait until North - South and East - West dialogues succeed. Let us radiate from our minds and hearts a universal love towards the entire living world. Let every single one of us take a personal responsibility and make a personal commitment to eradicate hunger of a fellow being somewhere on this planet, to bring shelter to a family exposed to sun and rain, to help self-development of a community of people who are denied their fundamental human rights and last but not least bring joy of living and mental peace to millions of human beings who are spiritually starved.

This is what I meant at the beginning of my address when I spoke about putting our mental faculties right. This personal commitment on our part will extend itself to our families, groups, institutions and governments so that we become active participants in liberating a universal process where causes that lead to suffering are removed from this earth. When the causes are removed the effects will not be there. This is the true joy of living.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is committed to strive towards this universality. Its target groups are drawn not only from the materially impoverished but extends to the spiritually starved as well. The recognition you have given this Movement re-affirms our faith in the efficacy of our thought and actions. The monetary award you have given will go into a common fund to help and encourage individuals and small groups in Sri Lanka and elsewhere who selflessly work for harmony, development and peace among human communities. I appeal to all concerned human beings, families and institutions, to make a commitment to strengthen this effort. I appeal to all governments of the world and their leaders to invest more of their time and resources to rebuild a new world on the solid foundations of personality, family and community reawakening.

Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies and distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I in all humility appeal for your continued co-operation in spreading the message of peace, harmony and goodness among all peoples.

May the Whole Living World be Well and Happy!

## RELIGIOUS PATH TO PEACE AND BUILDING A JUST WORLD

I feel happy and greatly honoured to be among distinguished personages of your eminence who are participating in this conference. I would like to thank very sincerely the International Association for Religious Freedom, the Niwano Peace Foundation and the Rissho Kosei-Kai for this refreshing experience.

I have been to Japan several times before, though for periods of very short duration and always left with the impression that "This is the nation and these are the people who can blaze a new trail in the history of mankind where science and technology can be harmonized with spirituality". It is my fervent hope that this time I can leave this country not merely with hopes and impressions but with a conviction that you have taken positive steps to initiate the much needed process of blending science and technology with spirituality at the appropriate time, that is before it is too late for mankind to do anything to forestall the vast destruction that science and technology sans spirituality has thrust upon mankind.

Our immediate past shows us how in every department of life we have attempted to impose the top down model. This is a characteristic common to all countries; so-called developed as well as developing nations of the world who have copied it blindly from the former. The model was imposed from above without any consideration for and without the participation of the people at the grassroots. Science and technology have contributed a great deal to facilitate this phenomenon. The more the hardware and software needed for these processes were designed and perfected by brilliant brains amidst us the power of forces of greed, hatred and spiritual ignorance in our societies increased. The former worked in their laboratories and factories motivated by the thrills of discoveries and the accompanying sense of intellectual fulfilment while the latter utilised these for an insatiable greed for power, position and wealth in the domains they could influence.

The absence of a spiritual base to guide the scientist, a base

that would have inspired the inner-self to realize the ethical responsibilities of great discoveries made by them, also contributed to the impotency of the scientists as individuals and as a community to control the destructive use to which these discoveries were converted by greedy individuals.

Religion in its spiritual essence is a horizontal phenomenon. The Sakya Muni, Lord Buddha, walked for forty years among rural and urban communities liberating spiritual, moral and cultural processes which influenced social, economic and political institutions which were small, manageable, close to the people and co-existing with nature. When religion loses its spiritual essence among individuals, families and small communities then its ability to influence macro top down processes by micro bottom up processes is negligible. Religion loses this spirit by becoming organised in the hands of those who aspire to exploit it for their own purposes at the macro-level.

Even Lord Buddha did not speak to a hungry man before he was fed and his hunger was satisfied. Therefore when spiritual poverty is combined with non-satisfaction of basic human needs, then the horizontal psycho-social infrastructure at the level of the people becomes so vulnerable that the top down processes continue to impose on them organised greed, hatred and ignorance, often in the name of development and progress, until the entire social fabric is shattered to pieces.

As I perceive it this is what has happened to our societies today. We have allowed our spiritual infrastructure to be destroyed in this manner by allowing modern science and technology to serve only the masters of top down processes. And I repeat that they, by their very size, are better suited to organise greed, hatred and egoism. On the other hand it is not easy for religion to be organised at the macro level in that manner while retaining its vital spiritual content. And religion without spirituality is another form of organising the baser instincts of man.

Then where can we find hope and a possible way out? I do think such hope and a way out can be found in a vast movement. It should be a Movement of individuals, families and small rural and urban communities. They become dedicated and involved in a serious effort to relay a strong spiritual infrastructure as an integral

component of a total re-awakening process of man and society and where science and technology are also appropriately and effectively utilised for the satisfaction of the basic needs in people. In this pursuit, one should always keep in mind the necessity to maintain the precarious balance between nature and man. This is where I see Eastern Initiative meeting with Western Response towards a realization for Peace.

Now let me illustrate by a concrete example what I am trying to tell you. I am now referring to the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka from where I come.

Sri Lanka for over two thousand five hundred years was influenced by the teachings of Lord Buddha. In the third century B.C. with the acceptance of Buddhism by the King of our country the people in general got converted to this compassionate doctrine. From that time onwards over a period of over twelve centuries a Buddhist civilization was built up in Sri Lanka with the great capital city of Anuradhapura as its centre. In subsequent centuries with successive South Indian invasions the capital got shifted to other parts of the country. With the advent of Western nations such as the Portuguese, the Dutch and finally the British Sri Lanka finally succumbed to foreign domination culminating in the country getting annexed to the British Empire in 1815. In 1948 Sri Lanka regained political independence but it was harder to secure other forms of freedom such as the freedom to re-discover past value systems and re-awaken the one's own political and economic systems. The Western materialistic value systems, political and economic institutions and development goals and strategies were blindly imitated after independence as in most other independent countries of Asia and Africa.

In mid - 1950s a group of young teachers and students in a Buddhist High School in the capital city of Colombo pioneered an educational extension and community service movement beginning from the most backward villages in the country which later developed into the Sarvodaya Movement. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement as it is popularly known has as its principal objective the non-violent transformation of man and society ensuring Peace and Dignity of life for All.

Sarvodaya means awakening or the well-being of all. The word Sarvodaya was coined by Mahatma Gandhi to denote the concept

of the welfare of all when he translated John Ruskin's book "Unto This Last". "Shramadana" means sharing of one's time, thought and effort. A Movement devoted to awaken all through sharing or shramadana is symbolized by the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. According to a person's ability or capacity he or she can share, time, labour, knowledge, land, wealth, and any other material or non-material resources to bring happiness to others.

In the process of sharing an individual cultivates four noble qualities. Metta - the thought of loving kindness towards all living beings, Karuna - compassionate actions that help those in need, Muditha - learning to secure dispassionate joy when making others in need happy and Upekkha - developing a mental capacity to accept both loss and gain, fame and blame with equanimity.

This is the Path to Personality Awakening which is the first objective of Sarvodaya effort.

In the process of sharing one has to work with others. Talk to others in a language pleasant and intelligible to them. Join hands only in constructive work and not for destructive purposes. Treat others as equals without any distinction as to caste, creed, race or any other man-made difference. These four qualities of Sharing, Pleasant Language, Constructive Activity and Equality form the dynamic base on which group relationships should be founded in the Movement. The four qualities are there for the purpose of strengthening the bonds that exist between small groups. Family or Group Awakening can only be achieved if the members of the family or group follow these principles of group conduct. Family or Group Awakening is the second objective of the Sarvodaya Movement.

Families and groups form village and urban communities. They all have Basic Human Needs that have to be satisfied before they can think of making any contribution to their culture or the cause of Peace. Further their communities may have certain community needs that need fulfilment. The Village Community Awakening and the Urban Community Awakening can only be achieved by a process of satisfaction of these needs and those are the third and fourth objectives of the Sarvodaya.

Sarvodaya for its development purposes has learned from communities Ten Basic Human Needs that they consider are their

priorities. These are (1) A Clean and Beautiful Environment, both in the material and mental sense (2) A Clean and Adequate supply of water (3) Minimum requirements of clothing (4) Adequate food supply (5) Housing (6) Basic Health Care (7) Communication Facilities like roads (8) Energy Needs (9) Total Education (10) Spiritual and Cultural Needs.

Mahatma Gandhi has also spoken about the Awakening of the Last in society -Antyodaya - and Sarvodaya follows this principle by selecting poorest of village and urban communities first to help them to help themselves to satisfy their basic human needs as the initial step towards improving their quality of life. Sarvodaya process, in other words, starts in a community of the least able, i.e. the poorest of the poor and even here it prefers to initiate action from the least powerful individual of the community and move upwards.

A shramadana camp is the first step taken in this direction for individual as well as community development. The selected community is assisted to develop self-reliance, community participation and a simple practical planned programme of development. The motivation comes both from the need to develop the personality awakening and group awakening qualities mentioned above as well as the need for an access road to their village, series of wells or a water service scheme to obtain pure drinking water, a health facility such as a series of toilettes, a school building, an irrigation canal or such other felt-need. The maximum possible human, material, technical and monetary resources are collected from within the community while the balance requirements for the work are found by the surrounding Sarvodaya village. The idea is to make the village people look inward into themselves, examine and identify their own needs, and the possible ways and means of satisfying them by their own effort. Sarvodaya Divisional Centres, District Centres and the National Headquarters constitute other fraternal resources.

A shramadana camp, the way it is conducted, becomes not only an exercise in organised manual work with maximum appropriate technological inputs to satisfy one or more basic needs, but it also becomes a re-awakening process in spiritual, moral and cultural dimensions of the participants' life and the village community as a whole. We call this process psychological

infrastructure laying of a village community. All members of the community - men, women and children - participate in a shramadana camp. The surrounding village communities are also inspired to participate and express their solidarity. They think together and plan out their tasks, cook together and share their meals, sing together and enjoy the work they do, talk together and learn from one another, meet together in discussions called family gatherings and meditate together wishing for the well-being of all.

A shramadana camp, which is the first step in the awakening of a village community, is thus an occasion where the villagers begin to rediscover their own collective potential in paving a path for their self-development.

The next step is the process known as social infrastructure laying. Progressively, under the guidance of trained Sarvodaya workers, the village community begins to organise themselves into various functional groups. A Mothers' Group, a Pre-school (Nursery) Children's Group, A School-going age (5 to 15) Children's Group, A Youth Group, A Farmers' Group and A General Adults' Group are formed.

The Sarvodaya Development Educational Institutions, numbering about 360, which are spread throughout Sri Lanka provide these groups occasions and facilitate opportunities for the emergence of their own leaders and skilled personnel trained to give them the much needed functional leadership. Each group both independently as well as in co-operation with other groups carry out activities that come within the purview of the satisfaction of their basic needs.

Sarvodaya believes in the total decentralisation of decision-making power resulting in the ultimate transfer of that power to the people who are directly affected by the decisions taken in those sectors that affect their lives. At the same time with the transfer of that power to the people a very strong horizontal co-ordination among these organised communities is also necessary. In other words decentralisation does not mean disorganisation. It means the reorganisation of the small groups at the grassroot level and above in such a manner as to enable them to reap the maximum benefits from such a process. The formation of a Sarvodaya Shramadana Society at the village level or urban level, totally managed by the community itself, in which the entire

community actively participates, is the ultimate Sarvodaya objective that it is trying to realize by going through the preceding psycho-social infrastructure laying processes. The SSS is organised according to the legal requirements of the country and can apply to the government to be registered as a legal entity.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka has been evolving for the last twenty five years. Already over 6000 villages out of a total of 23000 villages in Sri Lanka have been developing these Sarvodaya concepts and processes thus trailing a new path towards development. In every year about 2000 new villages are added to the Movement. Approximately two and a half to three million people are participant beneficiaries of this popular Movement in various ways.

The fifth and sixth objectives of Sarvodaya are National Awakening and World Awakening. A mass movement covering thousands of villages where people belonging to diverse ethnic, language and religious groups participate unitedly must necessarily influence the nation as whole and also come within the visibility of the world community. Hence it has to have its organisational structure working in such a manner as to facilitate a two way inter-action process to take place between the basic village/urban communities and national/international communities.

The national and International Headquarters of the Movement situated about 22 Kilometers from Colombo serves this vital function.

A number of village communities not exceeding ten form a cluster of villages. A close contact is maintained between these communities by a full time Sarvodaya worker who is known as a Gramadana Worker. Gramadana is a word which means Sharing of resources at the level of villages on a voluntary basis.

Several clusters of such villages are organised around Divisional Sarvodaya Centres. Such a centre is also called a Gramodaya Village Re-awakening Centre. Already over two hundred such centres with four to six full time workers are functioning throughout the country facilitating various training programmes and also providing various other kinds of material, financial, organisational and technical support for the Sarvodaya

groups and communities.

At the District level, the Divisional Centres are co-ordinated and supported by three kinds of institutions. Firstly, a District Sarvodaya Centre mainly doing co-ordination work with a co-ordinator and his staff. Secondly, a District Development Educational Institute providing leadership and vocational skills that cannot be provided at the divisional level. Thirdly, specialised training centres such as those for training of Buddhist Monks for Sarvodaya Community Leadership, for Agriculture, Savings and Credit, Small Scale Rural Industries etc. There are over 60 such district level development educational centres belonging to the movement. In all these centres over 2400 people, mostly youth, undergo residential training at any one given time.

Finally, the National and International Centre has facilities to pull all those together in a very strong co-ordination system that co-ordinates but does not control them. In a complex covering twelve and half acres of land there are eight compounds where from the simplest development needs of children such as nutrition and health care to difficult technical and economic problems are tackled according to Sarvodaya vision for the benefit of the people in the deprived village and urban communities.

Sarvodaya has been fortunate in having understanding collaborators and development partners from economically advanced countries. Most of them have tried to understand the way Sarvodaya has been evolving meeting every new challenge with a fresh response. They have contributed a great deal to the development of Sarvodaya thought and action. The great majority of our partners have understood us and appreciated our problems as much as we have understood constraints under which some of them had to work. However, in the majority of such collaborators, it was not difficult to effect a Common Course of action where our partners and Sarvodaya decided to work together with a sense of mutual confidence, human dignity and respect for each other's Philosophy and Independence. It was not the relationship that exists between a donor and a donee that existed between us. Our partners and we shared the mutual experience in the give and the take process which was indeed a two way process. There have been one or two partners who have tried to manipulate us to achieve their narrow objectives. Either we have won them over to

our spirituo-scientific approach or we have been forced to part with them for the time being as we strongly believe in self-determination, mutual trust and open dialogue.

The temporary parting would enable them to view the experiences they had with us with other experiences and thus contribute to the mellowing of their wisdom. Perhaps then, they would understand us better and we could renew our bonds and share our experiences in a much more beneficial manner.

This brings me to the question of Western Response to the Eastern Initiative. How is this possible for mutual benefit and Peace? Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka is certainly an Eastern initiative towards Peace through total development of man and society. Still I must say that though the initiative came from the East yet the final objective is not confined only to the people in the East. Sarvodaya considers the entire humanity as one family. For nearly fifteen years the Sarvodaya Movement has developed fraternal relationships with the Western World. What are the lessons we learned from these contacts? I shall try to summarise only a few.

Hundreds of volunteers and well-wishers from affluent countries have come and worked in Sri Lanka. There was no difficulty for them to share the fundamental values on which we based our work. The majority of them have realized the lack of balance in the scientific and technological development in their own countries sans spirituality.

They have experienced the potential devastation that this lack of balance has created in mankind. That was they shared a common ideal with us even before they came to profit from our own experience. Back in their own countries they have either formed Sarvodaya organisations themselves or formed support groups through their existing organisations. They have realized that in our strategies and in our philosophy there exists a practical way to deal with the problems found in their countries. The inspiration they derived from us had helped them to initiate processes similar to our own in their own areas of the world. Quite a wide network has been formed covering all continents.

Similarly volunteers from Sri Lanka have gone and worked both in economically advanced countries as well as in poor

countries. At the moment there are over 30 Sarvodaya workers serving in other Asian and African countries. This year two such Sarvodaya volunteers, a young Sri Lankan couple, who had served for two years in the West African Republic of Mali won the highest national awards from the President of that country. When they took up the challenge of serving Toko and other villages in Mali they spoke only their mother tongue, Sinhala. They were Buddhist but the communities they served professed Islam. Yet they proved that these and other man-made barriers cannot stand in the way to practising human love and service.

At the level of the non-professional people, transcending national, political, ethnic and cultural barriers, a psychological and spiritual infrastructure can be built up. This psycho-spiritual force when it catches momentum and reaches a certain critical mass can be self-multiplying and self-generating. Where governments fail to see how to achieve peace for their peoples, the people themselves will find ways of bringing it upon themselves.

Then, who are those that can respond to Eastern initiatives from the West?

From the Sarvodaya experience we can boldly say that from the level of the individual, the family and the community to the institutional and national levels including governments positive responses can be obtained leading to peace and development. We should not exclude any individual or organisation - governmental as well as non- governmental -from our initiative-response dynamics.

We have children in Sri Lankan villages who have been brought into fraternal relationships with children in, say West Germany. Similarly families with families, villages with villages, schools with schools have been brought into co-operation between Sri Lanka and Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Canada and the United States etc. Similarly, we have succeeded in getting an entire cluster of villages mentioned above linked with a non-governmental organisation, or an entire district project linked with a private or governmental organisation in a developed country.

Wherever there was success in such linkages there was mutual trust and acceptance of the local organisation as an equal partner

in spite of the fact that it may be at the receiving end as far as financial aid was concerned. There was no imposition of political ideologies on the local partner by the rich counterpart. There was a learning process taking place on both sides. An underlying spiritual relationship in spite of formal agreements, book-keeping, report writing, evaluations etc. was developed over a period of years.

Coming back to where we started, an initiative such as the one that has been taken by Sarvodaya has resulted in releasing that horizontal spirituo-moral, socio-cultural and politico-economic process which is much needed in the present day world both in the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Scientific, technological and financial inputs as appropriate, coming as the Western response to this mass movement of micro processes can make a world of difference to the achievement of the objectives of this Movement. Conversely the Movement can assist the Western initiative by an Eastern response of sharing its tried out spirituo-moral value systems.

Organised religions have a vital role to play in this universal process of spiritual and moral re-awakening as an integral part of social, political and economic re-construction of human society from bottom up. The challenge the custodians of these religions have to face is basically one of reverting back to the spiritual base where barriers between religions do not exist and then make an all out effort to use science and technology to help the horizontal processes of universal reconstruction of man and society.

Will not this combined inspirational initiative bring about a situation where we can witness a world-wide bottom up refreshing spiritual thrust towards a lasting and dynamic Movement of Peace binding all human beings together?

## NEW APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT - BUILDING A JUST WORLD

I am grateful to the United Nations Department of Public Information for inviting me to the Annual Conference of non-governmental organisations to make a few comments at this Opening Session. The subject, "New Approaches to Development - Building A Just World," is indeed a timely one.

Before I make my remarks on this subject, which at best could only serve as a catalyst for our own thinking, I would like to place before you a wish I always have when attending meetings of this nature and where subjects like human rights, development, justice and peace are discussed and strategies for their implementation are planned. Isn't it appropriate that we bring here with each one of us a true representative of those people and communities about whose development we discuss and for whose benefit we plan strategies and programmes? Since most of them may not be able to speak a foreign language we can act as their interpreters and facilitators so as to enable them to express their problems and suggest possible solutions acceptable to them?

Perhaps such an exercise will throw a lot of new insights to the dilemma of development. I have no doubt that those of us in NGOs which function at the level of the most deprived in our countries can without difficulty, find true representatives whose natural intelligence to understand a problem is not stunted by dry intellectualism. While the poor eke out a bare existence under most trying conditions imposed upon them by unjust social, political and economic systems, some of them still display the quintessence of humanity in their spiritual, moral and cultural behaviour. These are the true liberators who have to be brought to the international forums including those of the United Nations and I assure you that they will bring a much needed civilizing impact on all those who care to listen to them and understand them.

The people I refer to are simple people. Their problems also simple problems. And, simple problems need simple solutions which could also be found only by them. Unfortunately for them,

in the short run, and to the detriment of the decision-making elite as well in the long run, their problems are made very complex and difficult to be solved by the intervention of outsiders who do not share their values and their way of life.

The United Nations and its specialised agencies, in spite of innumerable numbers of good people serving in them, the World Bank and such other inter-governmental agencies and even most national and international NGOs, in my humble opinion, including the ones to which I too belong, can in effect turn out to be such intruders rather than their liberators. This has happened in the past. That is why it is so vital that direct participation of affected people be brought about in these conferences to speak with their own voices, while, we, who genuinely wish to help them, participate only as their interpreters and facilitators.

Having expressed that wish may I now make my remarks on the subject under consideration - New Approaches to Development-Building a Just World.

New Approaches are obviously needed because the old approaches have failed. Who made these approaches - both old and new - and for whom any way? Certainly in most cases these were not designed by the people who were supposed to benefit by them.

What are the main underlying goals and objectives of such developmental exercises? How far have these changed to suit the changing times and with the insights obtained as a result of successes and failures which the decision-makers experienced in their adventures with other people's lives? What were the roles of non-governmental organisations in this development process in relation to the goals, objectives and programmes that were carried out under the name of development? These are some of the fundamental issues to which we have to address our minds at this conference if we are not to waste our time, efforts and resources to engage ourselves in the usual ritual of filling old wines in new bottles.

If the true representatives of the oppressed of the world came here and not their spokesmen like you and I, however much we claim to sympathise with their plight, the first question they would raise is "What is this development you are talking about?"

“What is the style of life you want us to accept?” “What is the ultimate endproduct of the development approaches you are aiming at?” “Is it to belong to an affluent society where I have to alienate myself from my tradition and values, my own being, my wife and children, nature around me, and the community at large and consequently lose all those sources from which I get the joy of living?.”

Isn't it true that most approaches to development adopted during the last few centuries had as their target an affluent materialistic society, comparable to certain segments of societies in North America and Europe that turned out to be sour grapes even for some of the people in these countries? Having succeeded in their efforts to build similar pockets of affluence amidst staggering poverty, especially in the newly independent countries, didn't they think of pursuing the same goal assuming that those who were left behind could catch up later?

Isn't it a fact that these elite classes were the main beneficiaries of all international aid programmes that were meant for the so called third world because they were in a better position to identify themselves with the goals, life-styles, project formulation techniques, monitoring and evaluation systems, use of technologies of the first and second worlds and their developmental jargon because they themselves in effect were the first and second worlds amidst their hungry and powerless people? I do not think that any new development approach is going to change the situation of the 800 million people at the starvation level in our world and lead them to freedom and justice unless the very meaning, the goals and the objectives of Development are reappraised. It is my belief that the most realistic and honest approach is to deliberately remove one by one, from the basic communities in our world, those alienating ideological, technological and institutional influences which have been foisted on them and assist them to re-awaken what is within them as thinking self-conscious beings and leave in their hands the choice of developing ideas, technologies and structures that they think would be satisfactory and fruitful in terms of their values, needs and aspirations.

I realize what a difficult task this is and I also realize how unpalatable and unacceptable such a proposition would be to all

vested interests within the political, economic, technocratic, bureaucratic, religious or academic spheres at all levels, starting from the basic communities within nations to international formations. The opposition for such a radical change in perspective will come not only from what we generally call governmental and inter-governmental vested interests but also from certain non-governmental sources.

What do I mean by certain 'non-governmental' sources? In my experience, the expression 'non-governmental' is a very loose and vague one. It seems to include all those sources "that do not come under the direct control of governments."

However, the conduct of most non-governmental people like us, whether as individuals or as organisations, seems to be not so different from governmental or inter-governmental organisations. The way we understand development, the goals we place before ourselves, the methodologies we adopt, the patronising attitudes we develop towards those who are less affluent or powerful than us, the remunerations we receive for our work, all seem to be moving in the same direction as those already in government services. I do not challenge the fact that we do much better than governments in some of the areas of our work and even cast a positive influence on governmental policies and programmes. But is that what we should do? Is that our true role in the present context of the world?

May I ask for your indulgence to strike a personal note to this particular subject of the Role of NGOs from my own experience. I was barely nine years old when, under the persuasion of my parents and religious teachers, I learnt that the LESS IS MORE. 'From craving arises sorrow. From craving arises fear. To him or her who is free from craving there is no sorrow or fear.' I learnt from them that 'Santutthi paramam dhanam' which in the Pali language means 'CONTENTMENT IS THE SUPREME WEALTH'. Their aim was not an affluent society with its members possessing as much material wealth as possible, consuming as much non-renewable energy as possible and enjoying as much leisure time as possible in the pursuit of the pleasures of the senses. On the contrary, their aim was a sustainable No-Poverty Society. Living in this society they could strive to attain more satisfaction by being a part and parcel of

family and community life. There were plenty of leisurely pursuits which were in the nature of a refined civilized life leading to the discoveries in the higher realms of the mind for those who wanted to go further in search of true happiness.

This was the time that the Second World War was being fought. And I still remember my eighty year old grandmother who just couldn't understand who was fighting whom and why, teaching me a beautiful stanza from the Dhammapada, the meaning of which is : 'Most people never realize that all of us here shall one day perish, But those who do realize that truth, settle their quarrels peacefully.

After the Second World War, with the economic recovery of Western Europe, and specially West Germany, and the Economic miracle of Japan, ably supported by North American economic and technological power, we as rural youth in our countries, witnessed the replacement of these simple goals, endowed with sanity, serenity and simplicity, with less worthwhile economic goals, which were unattainable by all and which contributed to confusion, cruelty and complexity.

We joined the rat race in our countries, thanks to the ideological slavery that imperial power left behind. Their economic, political and social theories were rooted in a value system that was developed in the West based upon its commercialist, exploitative, imperialist and expansionist motivations. Most missionaries with merciless religious intolerance contributed to the destruction of the traditional value systems in countries. They along with westernised privileged classes ridiculed, discouraged and sabotaged any indigenous effort to re-build a theory and practice of development which could have been easily comprehended by the people and which they could have implemented with their own initiative, self-reliance and participation.

Need I add to the already existing volumes of information compiled by UN agencies and other institutions to confirm the point that increased economic growth has made only a few people rich while most became poorer in our countries. Similarly industrialisation too has brought its benefits to a few, while the vast majority of people lost their means of livelihood and became victims of its negative impact such as environmental pollution. In

other words the so-called economic science has failed to meet the needs of the weak and innocent millions in our countries.

What they are facing today is not a question of finding alternatives or new approaches to development. To me it is a question of making a choice between the central thought that underlies the present or future approaches to development motivated exclusively by individual or collective material affluence on the one hand, and the thought of total personality awakening in the context of a contented family and a No-Poverty-Society on the other. If the latter choice is made, as Prof. Sugata Dasgupta, the Director of the Jayaprakash Institute for Social Change in Calcutta, maintains, then the millions who have been bypassed by the present developmental process can awaken from where they are in a continuum to a post-modern society without joining the race for an illusory affluence.

From nearly thirty years of direct involvement with national and international NGOs committed to development I have come to five conclusions.

(1) The present goals and objectives, technologies and methodologies and structural arrangements promoted and pursued by governments and inter-governmental agencies have got into a self-perpetrating vicious cycle and if this is not changed radically the world will continue to have increased poverty, violence, wars, pollution and all other related evil and suffering which will affect all, both the affluent and the deprived.

(2) The initiative for radical change has to come from small communities, in all countries whether they are in the South or North, East or West, rich or poor, from those who subscribe to universal human values, and are prepared to establish non-exploitative, mutually enriching, direct, horizontal contacts with one another.

(3) The national and international organizations engaged in development activities outside the governmental programmes should be more innovative than imitative, non-violently radical and constructive than merely vociferous and confrontational and play the dual role of revealing the disastrous consequences of the current macro approaches and help to strengthen micro approaches that are gaining momentum all around the world for self-

development by indigenous communities themselves.

(4) All movements directed at anti-poverty, anti-racist, anti-exploitational, anti-war, anti-pollution, anti-sexist objectives should pay more attention to the re-awakening of the human personality and human societies pertaining not only to their physical quality of life but also to its spiritual, and cultural qualities of life as more recently highlighted by Karl Popper's three worlds-physical, psychological and cultural.

(5) Every effort should be made by governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations to bring technologies that are appropriate and relevant within the control and reach of such small communities as tools for their liberation and not as masters for their further enslavement.

Now let me explain briefly how we in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka have diligently followed for the last twenty six years a Path to Development which contains the principal thoughts I have expressed so far.

Our fundamental inspiration came to us from the Buddhist philosophy and practices, even though our Movement is not one exclusively working with or for Buddhists. We are a non-sectarian organisation in which Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Bahai's and others work equals. Sri Lanka is known from time immemorial as a Buddhist country and most of our values are derived from Buddhist teachings. Respect for all religions is a fundamental tenet of Buddhist teachings and therefore we have no difficulty in working together with mutual respect for one another.

The main theme of the western model of development seems to be extreme self-indulgence (*kamasukhallikanuyoga*) described by the Buddha as

"low, uncultured, individualistic, ignoble and unfruitful". The Buddha also condemned the idea of self-mortification (*attakila-mathanuyoga*) as "painful, ignoble and unfruitful." He advocated an ethical Middle Path which would be noble and fruitful and would contribute to the happiness of both oneself and others.

Prof. David Kalupahana of the University of Hawaii describes these two extreme patterns of living in the following words:

"While most people in the developed countries are enjoying

the satisfactions derived from such excessive material progress, some in the developing countries are continuing to clamour for similar material enjoyments innocently unaware of the moral decadence following such progress and the dissatisfactions and frustrations on the part of those who have been immersed in such material prosperity.

Others who have come to be dissatisfied with such excesses often move on to the other extreme of rejecting materialism altogether, becoming enamoured with a life of asceticism bordering on apathy thereby destroying any individual initiative for human progress and development.....Here then are two completely different ways of life both of which eventually lead to one result, namely, the complete subordination of the human being to external forces that are either material or spiritual.....In His very first discourse to the world, popularly known as the 'Discourse on the Establishment of the Principle of Righteousness' (Dhamma-Cakkappavattana-Sutta), the Buddha presented an ethical middle path as a guide to proper human behaviour leading to material as well as spiritual progress of mankind. This message seems to be more meaningful in the context of the modern world than it has ever been during the 2500 or more years of its survival."

It was the spirit of this Middle Path, which has also been described as the Noble Eight-fold Path, that guided the Sarvodaya thought and Shramadana action. Sarvodaya means the Awakening of All and Shramadana means the Sharing of One's Time, Thought and Effort. The goal of the Movement is to promote a way of life which contributes to the happiness of both oneself as well as others. The word Sarvodaya was coined by Mahatma Gandhi to differentiate between the Western utilitarian concept of the "maximum happiness of the majority" and the Asian Hindu - Buddhist concept of the Well-being of All, in which he believed. Sarvodaya Movement does not base its work on a minority - majority distinction, a distinction that is generally made in Western ethical discussions.

The Buddhist influence inspired us to use concept of Awakening which, of course, includes the Well- being of All, as the central thought in Sarvodaya. This awakening can take place in individuals without being individualistic, in families or groups, in

village or urban communities, and in national communities without being exclusive and as a world community embracing the whole of humanity. We found that such a goal gives every individual a chance to progress both economically and morally, while not abandoning his role as a member of any of the above groups. In other words the Sarvodaya notion of causal dependence allows for both possibilities: a person changing a society and a society changing the person.

Sarvodaya has thus shifted the emphasis of development from becoming a mere economic exercise and instead made it into an awakening process, whose application ranges from personality awakening of individuals to universal awakening of nations. As individuals or groups, governmental or non-governmental, small or big, every person can become a participant-beneficiary in such a Movement. The distinction between official development and non official development efforts also is to overcome in such a process.

Let me put it in another way. In the present day world, it is common knowledge that violent, unjust, centralised and impersonal structures have taken over the control of political, economic, technological and other processes that affect the lives of people. Even heads of states and humane rulers find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to direct such forces which contain a self-perpetrating momentum within them. If only the numerous UN resolutions which were adopted here were sincerely implemented we would be witnessing a more peaceful and a more just world today. However this has not happened. I doubt whether that will happen even in the future, unless we build a mass movement of the people as a single humanity, integrating families and small communities and thereby build direct horizontal relationships for mutual understanding and support. Sarvodaya is engaged in creating such a Movement.

Absolutistic science and dogmatic theorising have put in the mouths of its exponents, words like idealistic, unpragmatic, turning the clock back, mystical and so on when one tries to look at the problem as it has come to be in its total context and try to depict movements like Sarvodaya in such terms. Nevertheless, in spite of indifference, ridicule, abuse and oppression experienced from such vested interests, today, we have been able to reach over

7000 communities in Sri Lanka alone, where this people's movement is functioning at different stages.

A community that decides to follow the Sarvodaya path to self development accepts the importance of awakening themselves as individuals, families and as a group of families. Besides satisfying their physical and cultural needs such groups and communities also recognize the importance of fulfilling their psychological needs. In the words of James H. Craig of the Synergy Power Institute of Berkeley, California:

"The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka sees ten basic needs as essential for human well-being. The seven material needs are for a pleasant, healthful environment, food, water, clothing, healthcare, housing and energy. The other three basic needs are the educational, the social, and the cultural/spiritual needs.

"I've devised an alternative formulation that lumps together the first seven basic needs and expands on the last three. The well-being of all will be assured if it is seen to that all are able (1) to have their material needs met, (2) to be able to understand what is going on and to find meaning in life and the universe, (3) to have community that is to be connected to one another, to care about, others and be cared about, to give and receive love and support, (4) self-determination, to have some control over what happens to self, (5) self-expression - to be able to give full expression to one's feelings and abilities and talents, and (6) to feel good about oneself."

Talking of Spiritual Guidelines for an American Sarvodaya, Craig says:

".....While society is determined by its people, the nature of the people is not determined by the nature of society. Instead people's nature is a joint product of their inborn characteristic and the environmental influences they are subjected to. And, further, society is not monolithic. Some harsh regions of society shape people in one way. Other, nourishing regions shape people differently. Sarvodaya can become a nourishing region of society in America, as it is in Sri Lanka. And as it nourishes the loving kindness of a growing number of people, those people's behaviour will begin to change the nature of the larger

society.....Sarvodaya is a path towards well-being and happiness of all people. I believe material and spiritual well-being go hand in hand for individuals and communities. I believe any change for the better must have a solid grounding at the grassroots level.....”

Sarvodaya begins its work with the most deprived in a society by helping them to awaken their sense of self-reliance and need for community participation to satisfy with their own effort and shared resources, in relation to one or more of their basic human needs in a planned way. Even the few well-to-do in their society are not excluded from active participation. Some theoreticians, who themselves belong to the elite class, sometimes criticise us from a distance for allowing such people to come and participate in Sarvodaya activities in villages, thereby implying that such participation legitimizes exploitation and opens other possibilities for such people. Our experience in this regard is quite the opposite.

Having laid a psycho-spiritual infrastructure in the community by a constructive work programme, where all members of the community - men, women and children - gift their time, thought and effort, Sarvodaya workers proceed to help the people in establishing a social infrastructure where the members of the community get organised according to their age-groups and, needs pertaining to those age-groups. For example, an organised nursery group goes into the question of nutrition, child-health care and psycho-social development of the children of the pre-school age. An organisation of mothers help in day care programmes, immunization campaigns, home gardening, savings and credit schemes, community shops and income generating small projects. Youth groups go into every aspect of the integrated village development as well as participation in Sarvodaya activities at divisional, district, national and international levels.

The most important instrument for structural change in the village is the Sarvodaya Shramadana Society at the village level which becomes a legal personality once registered with the government. Under the law this society enjoys corporate status to undertake within its capacity a wide range of development activities which will have both material and spiritual components. All the other training centers, co-ordinating bodies and the

national and international arrangements are to facilitate the activities of these societies by helping them with needed skills, knowledge, capital and organisational strength.

Sarvodaya is not working in a vacuum. It has to content with lot of other forces which influence the life of local communities directly or indirectly. Some of these forces which negatively affect these communities and work in a direction opposed to where Sarvodaya wants to move, obtain their ideological, technological, institutional and financial nourishment from internationally powerful establishments.

Therefore while a psycho-spiritual, social, economic, institutional and technological infrastructure is built at the village level, it is necessary for the Movement to take other steps to strengthen and provide protection for them. Some of the steps that the Movement has taken in response to these challenges are:

(1) Obtaining the services of a trained and experienced full-time volunteer to co-ordinate and support a cluster of villages not exceeding ten; (2) establishment of Divisional Centers for several clusters of such villages, each centre with a minimum of five senior full-time Sarvodaya workers to co-ordinate, support, train, and have liaison with governmental and other agencies; (3) establishment of District Centers, one for each administrative district of the country and Development - Educational Institutes to carry out the same functions at a district level; (4) establishment of a National Co-ordinating Centre to carry out the above functions with a national and international dimension and (5) establishment of over forty specialised divisions such as Sarvodaya Children's Services, Sarvodaya Rural Technical Services, Sarvodaya Shanti Sena (working to national peace and harmony), Sarvodaya Research Institute and Sarvodaya International Services.

It is common knowledge that lots of international support in numerous ways are flowing into so called developing countries to legitimize and finance the development of the poor in these countries on the western model. Under the circumstances it is impossible for non-governmental agencies like Sarvodaya to be self-financing. We make a clear distinction between self-financing and self-reliance. Self-reliance applies more to the choice of life styles, development goals, technologies, institutional arrangements and so on. Self-financing applies only to capital and

allied fields. When international NGOs, who themselves depend heavily on governments or corporations for their own survival come to our countries and advise us to be self-financing we feel very embarrassed when we have to remind them to advise their own governments to pass on that advice to our governments first.

In this world of exploitation of the poor by the rich countries it is meaningless to talk about self-reliance in the sense of self-financing, whether it is in relation to governments or NGOs. Thus Sarvodaya is a mass movement which has succeeded in inspiring and organising the poorest of the poor into self-development action based on self-reliance. They can move upwards at their own steady pace from the level of basic need satisfaction at individual and family level to secondary and tertiary need satisfaction at community and national levels.

Its chosen path to economic and social change and justice is non-dogmatic, non-violent non-confrontational and non-acquiescive. Therefore it has kept itself aloof from power and party-politics, sectarian activities, confronting governments or allowing itself to be acquiesced to governments. On the other hand it has allowed itself to evolve its own dynamism in the context of changing socio-economic and political realities by strengthening the power of the people to think to decide and to work in the best interests of themselves and the society at large.

Sarvodaya has received considerable inputs locally, in the form of free labour and services by tens of thousands of people. It also has received assistance in the form of land, buildings, equipment, food and other material resources from the general public as well as the government. The indigenous support the movement has received, if monetized, would be many times more than the foreign aid it has received. However from 1972 onwards, the movement was able to achieve much more as a result of the development co-operation it received from several fraternal international NGOs. We tried our very best to make it a two way process by helping these friendly organisations as much as we could by serving as a resource base for their development education programmes in their own countries. Most of them understood our approach and continue to support us. Few, however, who were not different from multinational companies, dropped us like hot potatoes, when they couldn't make us obey

their dictates. These few were very unethical and clearly showed neo-colonialist postures in the international NGO relations.

Today, Sarvodaya has over forty Sri Lankan volunteers serving in other developing countries, some of them through the UN Domestic Volunteer Service programme. Similarly, over two hundred expatriates share their experiences with Sarvodaya every year in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya Shramadana International with a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (International NGO Division), has become a part of a horizontal network to facilitate direct technical programmes between developing countries. The Asian Institute of Rural Development based in Bangalore, Approtech - Asia based in the Philippines, CILCA based in Bamako-Mali, The Asian and Pacific Bureau of Adult Education affiliated to the International Council on Adult Education (Incidentally the organisation that brought me to this conference), Development Innovations and Networks based in Geneva, are some of the Third World Organisations involved in this co-operation.

I would like to make a reference to a special programme we are trying out with some fraternal organisations based in the United States. Oxfam - America for the last two years has carried out a very innovative exchange programme with Sarvodaya. They call it Vishvadana - which means Universal Sharing. Once or twice every year, they send about twenty persons associated with Oxfam to Sri Lanka to live in Sri Lankan villages where Sarvodaya is active so as to have direct dialogue with people on development related issues. A similar programme is carried out by the Norwegian Folk High Schools with support from NORAD.

World Runners and Global Partners, both based in the United States, each has a link programme with a cluster of eleven Sri Lankan villages. Similarly, a number of cities in Belgium, the Netherlands and West Germany have established direct links with Sarvodaya villages in Sri Lanka for mutual dialogue and co-operation. Sarvodaya Shramadana International is now trying to establish similar links for other third world communities. Individuals, families and groups can be linked in this manner cutting across all barriers. All these are examples to show the possibilities that we, as NGOs, have in bringing our peoples into direct contact with one another.

In his keynote address to the Second Sarvodaya International Conference held in Enschede, the Netherlands, in 1981, Prof. Johan Galtung, having mentioned that "an increasing number of people see the future not in the state and not in the corporation, but in the small community", went on to state five principles that more or less constitute some kind of common ethos and are, more or less, pronounced in various countries. They are: (1) Well-being (2) Identity (3) Freedom (4) Survival and (5) Governance of local units. In his closing remarks he said, "In my ideal world there would be strong healthy communities all over the world, the oil lamps would multiply and they would be woven together sometimes by the principles of vicinity, being neighbours and sometimes by principles of affinity, liking each other, sharing certain basic values. And here I see then the Sarvodaya Shramadana International as a key element in a family of related enterprises around the world."

Naam Movement in Upper Volta, Pesantrans in Indonesia and Chipco Movement in India and many other community based indigenous efforts point the way development should proceed from the bottom up. All of these like Sarvodaya are working under extreme hardships as already mentioned.

Prof. Denis Goulet, after an intensive study of Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka says in his book 'Survival With Integrity - Sarvodaya at the Crossroads'.

"To what extent could Sarvodaya....marshall an international support system to reinforce its own attempts to carry out a humane development option within Sri Lanka? Instead of receiving large sums of financial aid from Europe and North America, might not Sarvodaya receive diplomatic support in the form of political approval and defence of its right to pursue another path and legal encouragement for its newly assumed role in the United Nations?

Above all, were Sarvodaya to expand and render more concrete its value commitment to Sarvodaya International - at present a loose and small network of sympathisers - it might lead the way to new patterns of international decision-making on development. One imagines, for instance, pressure from third world NGOs to be given a voice in the deliberations of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the UNDP and other elite

bodies whose decisions have such far reaching impact on the lives of millions of the 'poorest of the poor.' Together with other groups, Sarvodaya might be able to contribute towards revolutionizing the mode in which international development conferences are managed, whether under the aegis of the UN, its specialised agencies, or other groups such as the Third World Forum, OPEC Group, and Pugwash. One instinctively thinks of linkage with other Third World groups to negotiate 'contracts of solidarity', a concept recently proposed by an African international civil servant, Albert Tevodejre."

While I would welcome this idea of Prof. Denis Goulet and do everything within our capacity to build up such influence in these august institutions, I would give the first priority to building an extensive network of small communities the world over, and go on with development work at the grassroots-development, as an awakening process of human beings, families and small communities both in their material and spiritual life. I would urge that the role of NGOs, particularly those of the rich world, should be to facilitate this process. I would also urge that the role of the UN specialized agencies praising the effectiveness of NGOs should be to support such a process of awakening of the basic communities to their own potential to survive and progress, rather than spend colossal amounts of money on researches, publications and bringing people like us together, too frequently!

"Sarvodaya Movement," as Dr. Joanna Macy says in her book *Dharma and Development*, "like all other organisations, is amply beset with human feelings; it suffers as we do all, from delusion, greed, sloth, conflict. Indeed, that makes its story more relevant, for it shows how people can work together for development despite all the obstacles of our obstinate humanity. What it shows, particularly, is that we can learn to draw strength from each other, and specially from religious traditions to which we are heirs. Powerless embittered, and apathetic Sri Lankan villagers have drawn inspiration for action from their once discredited tradition, the Dharma."

Prof. Detlef Kantowsky of the University of Konstanz in his book, 'SARVODAYA - The Other Development', makes the point that, Sarvodaya does not speak of the virtues of underdevelopment and the sanctity of poverty', even though its 'concept of righteous

living within the limits of ten basic needs might appear to a western consumerist mind as a glorification of poverty'.....'Avoiding the extremes of sensual materialism and ascetic self-mortification, it wants to offer a timely raft for crossing the stream of today's illusions - the trappings of modernisation'.

Sarvodaya is only one experience among many known and unknown dynamic movements in the world where local integrated action for human and social development based on traditional universal thoughts is taking place. These movements are too precious to be made mere ornaments to give a superficial decoration to governmental, inter-governmental and even international non-governmental organisations whose theories and practices are rotten at the core as evidenced by the polluted, starved, warring, divided and immoral world that these approaches have created. What they demand is not mere handouts to give first aid to the victims of modern development nor an opportunity for their voices to be heard. They demand freedom of thought, organisation and non-violent action within their small communities to bypass the mirage of material affluence in the same way as 'Mahatma Gandhi and Tolstoy, for example, refused to be cowed down by the myths of modern civilization.'

As Sugata Dasgupta says, "the post-modern society.....has been struggling to be born over all these years, but an alien process of development kept lashing at it and impeded its progress. Catalyzed by the religions of Asia and the many cultures of her civilization, the Third World could leap forward to the post-modern era with ease. It is the most logical and effective continuum of the old societies of the new nations and could be a bastion of peace for the other two."

In conclusion, let me state, that I have not been talking of an illusion but of the reality which is the world of the majority of mankind. I am a citizen of that real world whose reality of want, poverty and exploitation is everywhere, in far off Sri Lanka just as much as on our own doorstep here at the United Nations. Development and justice will prevail in the world to the extent that these communities enjoy freedom to organise and manage their own life-styles and human relationships without interference from external forces, who have proved inimical to their values as

well as to all other life sustaining systems. These external forces are strange bed-fellows who have strong links from the grassroots to the world level and have secured legitimacy from various sectors and disciplines.

Hence the task confronting the serious and fair-minded governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental persons and organisations is quite clear. Identify with these communities in thought, word and deed. Co-operate with them to build strong horizontal links among themselves. Place at their disposal as required by them, the necessary knowledge, resources and technology in order to help them to defend themselves against the top down forces of evil. Leave entirely in their hands the business of laying down the twenty golden rules for the new society.

It is my belief that small communities around our one world can release from within their minds and hearts a universal love which will surely build itself into a critical mass of self-multiplying and dynamic thought force. I also do believe that motivated from such consciousness a chain of compassionate actions in the form of sharing of labour, knowledge, wealth and technology as appropriate will emerge linking them together as human beings, families, groups and communities. The dispassionate joy that will result in such compassion and sharing will lead to equanimity in human thinking. A United Nations resolution cannot achieve this. But you and I as human beings, wherever we serve, can achieve it from the moment we decide to undergo this transformation, first within our own make-up.

My remarks, as I stated at the start, are meant only as a catalyst for our own thinking. The question that we must all answer now is, are we ready to rise to this challenge as concerned human beings? Before we respond let us remember Mahatma Gandhi's words: "Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory."

Thank you for your patience.

## ON POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

As a Sri Lankan, as a very old friend of the World Assembly of Youth, who had the good fortune to be an Executive Member of WAY, may I also welcome you to our beautiful island? Before I commence to make whatever remarks I have to make on the subject you have given me, may I make an invitation to all of you to take time off to make a visit to the Sarvodaya Headquarters, so that I would be able to offer you even a cup of tea. This is an obligation on my part because it was WAY that exposed me to the broad world outside.

I remember in 1960's the Asian Secretary, Mr. K.V. Reddi visited us. After that the Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Piet Dijkstra came to Sri Lanka, followed by Mr. Jyote Shankar Singh and numerous friends.

I was very much a part and parcel of WAY. But, as much as the innocent feeling I had of the kind, developed world was disturbed by WAY, it also opened a certain opportunity for me personally to come across many great persons including your present President.

I lost touch with WAY in 1972. But, between 1972 and now, I may have visited 50 countries in different parts of the world. And in practically every country I came across an old WAY person. This itself is a great contribution that WAY has made to our human family.

Therefore, I was very happy when I got the invitation first from the International Council on Voluntary Agencies and then from the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute for this meeting. I would like to thank them very much for inviting me.

Today, you will be deliberating on the theme, "Population, Development and Environment". I think that all these three, whether it be Population, Development or Environment, it should primarily concern us as human beings and as human personalities, living in certain human groups called families or small and big communities. Therefore, I feel that it is very important for us first

to realize how we, as individuals, have been evolving from the moment we were conceived in a mother's womb.

According to Western Science and teachings, a human being is supposed to have both an environmental factor and a biological factor affecting the origin and development of its personality. But in the case of Asian thinking, there are four factors contributing to the personality growth of an individual. We know that we have a biological foundation in that, two cells from our parents join together into a Zygote, which develops our physical form. But, this takes place in a certain environment, not only the physical environment of the mother's womb, but also in a psychological environment to which the mother, the father and the members of the family all contribute. So, when we talk of environment, we must take into consideration the psychological environment in which the child is conceived.

Next, we believe there is a third factor. We call it a Karmic Factor. A Christian may call it a divine factor and a scientist may call it a "X" factor, because in modern science, when you can't explain something they call it "X". So, there is this third factor, whatever you may call it, which contributes to the very genesis of the individual.

Then there is a fourth factor which is dormant when we are inside the mother's womb, but starts functioning actively the moment we experience the coldness of the world outside. This is the mind. The Mind Factor.

When you take these four factors, the biological, the environmental, the Karmic, divine, or "X", and the mind factor, these are the four elements which go to form what we call a human personality.

Now, when you talk of population, I am sure you are thinking of population planning, or family planning. I am also sure that you are thinking that I am going to oppose family planning. No. What I am going to say is that, when the parents, due to political or economic reasons try not to conceive, there is a certain psychological environment to which a child is subjected if an accident happens. So at the very beginning it is an unwanted child that is going to be born.

I remember when WAY had an alternative or parallel

Assembly with the Second World Food Congress in the Hague, we were taken to what is called a "3rd World Village". In that village there was a very big board saying, "We are the children that our parents did not want" So, when you talk of development, when you talk of population, when you talk of environment, don't forget this factor. To what extent do we have things that are forced on us by circumstances or outside agencies?

The human being of today has become so powerful with all the gadgetry that science and technology have placed in their hands that unless the human personality is very strong, very progressive and is based on universal principles, there is no hope for this world. I don't know how many of you saw the anti-Christ films. I saw the first two in the series-"Omen" - where they are trying to show how with the forces of good the forces of evil also work in the world. Therefore, I believe that inspite of various community programmes, co-operative and non-individualistic programmes we talk about, it is very essential that whenever we talk of development, population and environment, we remember the fact that unless total personality awakening becomes the fundamental principle on which all other things are built up, we are going to have a disastrous end to this civilization we have built.

Therefore, the first point I would emphasise is, the development or the awakening of the human personality. During the last week of July in this country, there was a time when there was no law and order, no people's strength, to be seen anywhere and there was utter disregard for very basic human values. What do I mean by this? If 25 people get together and harass one person, this is breakdown of the value system. This is not different to the installation of a ballistic missile somewhere to be directed at an unseen human population. It is the same thing in a microcosm. This means that the value system is shattered from its very foundation. People begin to preach that non-violence is no solution, without even trying it out. Violence is said to be the answer. Forgiveness is all nonsense, and revenge is what we need. Compassion towards all is nonsense, what is important is to continue to have our language, our culture and things like that. So people become more or less fragmented in their minds, in their very thinking.

This is happening in a world where one half of man's brain was kept undeveloped for about 300 years. From the time that

empirical science was applied to technology man always tried to measure things. Those things that you could measure were considered scientific. But you couldn't measure love. You couldn't measure forgiveness, you couldn't measure sobriety in a person, sanity in a mad world. So these elements were considered to be unscientific, or idealistic. Karl Marx divided ideologies into two units - Materialistic and idealistic. For example, Buddhist philosophy does not fall into either of these categories. We talk always of "Nama" and "Rupa" together -Name and Form, or Mind and Matter - Now, we are living in a world which was conditioned for about 300 years to think in terms of measurable, empirical things. The result was that we lost the intuitive half of the brain. Intuition which is spontaneous, intuition which is the result of a number of processes operating around us, giving us a spontaneous reaction to the challenges we meet, was not analyzed. It was completely forgotten.

Then came a situation where materialism reached its highest level, like in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, America and most other countries, where they started talking in terms of a Super Post Industrial Consumer Culture. This made a lot of people, particularly young people, become totally frustrated. They took to drugs. They started "losing" themselves, not in a spiritual way, but in a different way, to "find" themselves. And though it was bad in a way, it made a lot of people think about the other side of the brain, the spiritual half of the brain.

In the modern context of the world, I think that there is a general consensus of opinion that we cannot any longer go on one track but we have to have a balance where spirituality and science go hand in hand. So, how can we, as young people, as educators, as parents, try to create a situation where the human personality can experience this balance? I think this is one aspect where you have to give serious thought. Now we have schools for children between 5 and 14 years. And we can give, say, 6 to 7 years of primary education. Well, we have done something, but we have forgotten the first five years. And we forget those few months where the child is growing in the mother's womb. We forget that if the beginning is influenced by the wrong forces, the child may use the lethal weapons that the preceding generation has made available to him. So, when we talk of development, environment

or population today, we cannot forget all these facts.

Then we come to the element of the personality of the family. In most materially advanced countries, this family unit has been disturbed and sometimes destroyed. So much so that the affection, the company, and the psychological stability that a child needs at that age, won't be given. But in most developing countries, we still have a possibility of organising family - based programmes so that the family unit is strengthened than weakened. All what I say now is based on my own practical, personal experience. So the awakening of the family unit becomes another ideal.

Now, what do we get in an Asian family? This is so for other families in other parts of the world also, but I am talking of the Asian family, because we are supposed to be yet poor and I am certainly happy that we have not yet "developed". This is because I think development is the biggest cause for poverty. Development is the underlying force that brings about violence in our world. This development is explained as a process of increasing growth, increasing the per capita income, increasing not only the needs in man making them into wants, but also increasing the greed in man. This development, this advancement of greed in man has become a highly recognised, adored factor for the advancement of our society.

So we have to re-think whether we should go ahead with this development or whether we should stop it with all our might. The places where I had played about by the sea shore in my own village, are almost uninhabitable today. In the name of this development, tourism is promoted by people thinking only in terms of foreign exchange. Respective Governments have brought about chaos in our villages. Everywhere you get drugs, you get people who have no respect for local culture, people who have scant respect for values, whose master is money, whose god is money. Such people begin to control the local communities. Our families have to live in the context of these forces which have been generated by so called development. This is why we have to think in terms of a process of value systems based on sharing, simplicity, joy within our families, in the face of these development forces that have been imposed upon us.

Countries like India and Sri Lanka are still villages basically. We have about 23,000 to 24,000 villages in our country and these

villages are the least benefited from this so called development, because development is mostly a macro-exercise where decisions are made not in the villages, but in city capitals of developed countries. The result of this is that the real needs and aspirations of people are forgotten. So, how can we think of a Community Awakening Programme, where the people are given power so that they are able to develop in the direction that they think is best?

Then we come to the next level, of thinking in terms of Nations. Today nations are human entities without the value half. There are in the historical records, that at the time when Jesus Christ was born, we had some ambassadors or diplomats, who were called "Ambassadors of Righteousness." They took the best of the value system the best of the way of life, from our countries to other countries. Today, what has happened? Diplomacy has become a nice word for all the spying and other such dirty things. Every embassy has a person to collect all the dirty information. I challenge any country, including my country to prove that they have someone in the embassy to collect the best of cultures, the best of knowledge, the best of the life of the people, from the countries where they serve. So where are we going? Aren't we going from darkness to darkness?

My friend from a developed country writes to me asking me why the Sarvodaya Movement is not standing against the Government of Sri Lanka during the recent troubles we had. So I wrote back to him and asked, what are you saying against the installation of ballistic missiles in your country?

We think that wisdom is proportional to the per capita income that a country gets. Simply because your skin is brown or black or yellow, that does not mean that you have less wisdom. We are living in a world where nations and states have become glorified prisons for individuals, families and small communities. We have to therefore, bring about a radical change. A radical change in thinking, technology and structure.

What is the radical change in thinking we have to bring about? Thinking of our own country, when I was born a Sinhalese and spoke the Sinhalese language, I was very proud to call myself a Sinhala not because I had a special kind of blood or a special kind of intelligence or a special kind of divinity in me. I was proud to call myself a Sinhalese because I was taught to think in terms of

the entire living world. If a Sinhalese thinks in terms of a Sinhalese and a Tamil, then he is not a proper Sinhalese. He is only a Sinhalese by label and not in the spirit. Just imagine what a beautiful society we can make out of this diversity if we can bring about a unity where the essence of all cultures is brought together? Imagine a situation where you have all types of dance forms from various cultures being performed on the same stage, and how boring it would be if only one dance was there. We have forgotten to see the essence of unity because diversity helps us in the ignoble attitudes we have in our minds.

Firstly, diversity helps us to increase our greed. Greed for wealth, greed for power, greed for fame. Greed won't increase only if you think of humanity as a whole. Christians have forgotten the philosophy "Love thy neighbours as thyself." It was only last week that a very eminent Christian missionary came to me as if I was some animal to be preyed upon, and I had to quote from the sermon on the Mount to calm him. Then about a month ago, a Buddhist Monk asked me, "How dare you go and work for the Tamils"? He had obviously forgotten the elementary teachings of the Buddha who said not only to work for the well-being of one's self, but also to work towards the well-being of all living world. These great teachings, whether they were philosophic, religious, or economic, which would bring people together, have become instruments today to divide our people. To divide our people in a world where greed is not only operating as an individual weakness in a human being, but in a world where greed is glorified as one of the most important motivating factors to build up our countries.

Therefore, when I say 'changing ideas,' how do we bring about a change in the thinking of the people? Basically, loving kindness should prevail. Compassion should be the overriding factor, in all matters relating to human life. How can we organise this compassion? I heard that you have come from 27 different countries. So how can we, who come from all these countries, through our Organisation WAY, give form and purpose and direction to organise compassion in a world where greed is organised? This is not easy. I have observed in WAY also how sometimes during election time people go canvassing and how they virtually destroyed the organisation in 1971 or 1972. That

was the last election of WAY I attended. I felt thoroughly ashamed, and told those who were present not to put in my name for anything. However, I was elected with only one person not voting - they said it was a Sri Lankan - all the others voted for me. Well, we can put an end to this sort of conflict, and have a very high ideal before our minds.

We have also organised hatred in the world. Volumes and volumes have been written about the July incidents, in European and other countries. T.V. programmes show the brutalities committed here. Such brutalities are there everywhere. But, at the same time, while one in ten thousand resorts to violence, there are many, many others who give protection to the innocent, giving relief and trying to rehabilitate them. Why won't the media give publicity to this sort of act?

This is because they are all tuned to highlight hatred, not love. If a mother kills a child, that is news. But if mothers give sustenance to millions and millions of children that is not news. So we have to think how we can get the message of love across in this world of hatred. In many countries there are hundreds and thousands of groups who work for non-violence. They are not advertised, not known. On the other hand, in newspapers, radio, T.V. and other media, we find that all the conflicts are highlighted. Therefore, we have to bring about a situation where more and more awareness could be created in people about all these positive things happening in our world.

Then, we have a lot of ignorance in our world. We normally think knowledge is what we know about things outside. Very little emphasis is given to our inner world. We have forgotten that. We do a lot of research about external things, but, very little energy is spent to go into the spiritual side of man. In other words, how can we get enlightenment organised in a world where ignorance is organised? A lot of books are now coming out written by physicists, on these subjects, examining the spiritual side of man.

I remember in 1967, we had one sad experience in WAY. I was invited to a meeting in India, and along with five other young people we went to this place, where we were told that we would be presented with one of the best cultural items that they would be able to present. So we all thought that perhaps some Kathakali or

Manipuri dance would be shown. What happened? A young girl, perhaps imported from Hongkong or somewhere, came in and started a strip tease dance. I felt so ashamed that I told the Minister of Health of India, "Sir, in my primitive society where I was brought up, I am not used to this sort of thing," and I walked out of that place because I took a very strong objection to this. Why? Because I feel that we cannot separate the six elements necessary for development which I call awakening.

Firstly, the spiritual element - where I look within myself to see to what extent my involvement with any activity is going to make me a man with less greed, less hatred, and less ignorance. This is called spiritual development. All the time trying to understand the inner workings of your personality with what you do outside. Nobody else can see it except one's own self. Such an individual gets a lot of peace and a lot of equanimity, and the entire world appears to him to be very beautiful. Every human being appears to be somebody whom you should respect, love and help. Nature happens to be something you have to protect. This is called spirituality.

Secondly, a person develops certain interpersonal relationships in his words, in his food, in his dress, in his day to day style of life.

He should develop these relationships based on spiritual values. Deceit, corruption and harsh words have no place, neither do alcoholism or drugs. In other words, we have what we call a moral relationship.

A Gentleman from a Scandinavian country came about two years back, and told me that he had a conscience and therefore he did not agree with the way a certain development project was going. He asked me how we could change this situation. So, I went with a group of people from our Movement and spent three days where they were working, and got the co-operation of the villagers and got the project going in 25 places within the district. We gave power and purpose to the ordinary people and completed the project with their help. Afterwards, teams came, did evaluations, wrote reports and acknowledged the contribution of people's participation in this sort of project. Then we left the project because they got what they wanted from us. But after many months, they are still where they were with regard to the project.

What really happens is that about 60% of the money that is given in the form of aid, goes back to the original country through the personnel and other things. Another 30% go to the corrupt locals. Only about 10% of this money goes to the ordinary people. And at what cost? Destroying the unpolluted nature of the country and the entire beauty of the place and worst of all, people become slaves to the system. This sort of "Development" is carried on by people without morals. So, it is useless to talk about development without talking about this second element, spiritual and moral, and the right human relationships.

The third element is culture. Culture is the way you satisfy your physical and mental or material and non-material needs, without doing any harm to spiritual and moral life. If I have a huge house, which I cannot use, which is too big for my family, this is not a part of my culture because there are others without a shade over their heads living next door. This is anti-cultural. If I eat, drink and dress in such a way that there is a big gap between the person below me and I, then I am not a man who has understood the values of that culture. So culture has something to do with moral principles, spiritual values and egalitarian qualities. That was the type of culture we had. Based on these three spiritual, moral and cultural elements, we built a social, economic and political foundation.

What is the social element we built up? would mention only a few examples. Ability on the part of people to participate, ability to make decisions, ability to get organised to make decisions, ability to define and design their own education and their own improvement programmes. We call this social development. It is not just getting socialized. Social development should also bring about situations where people, in spite of their multi-ethnic, multi-lingual nature are able to see the unity in that diversity.

Then we come to the economics. We can never reach the economic level of the rich countries. We must not aim at it also, because it is not going to be proportionate to the joy of living. What we need is to build an economy immediately satisfying the needs of the poorest of our country. We should be capable of meeting all the basic needs of the poorest in society. When I say basic needs, I specifically mention 10- needs. - The need for a clean and beautiful environment, an adequate supply of clean

water, simple clothing, food, basic health care, a basic communication system, basic housing facilities, basic fuel and energy requirements and basic education for spiritual and cultural necessities. When you take these ten basic human needs, try to relate them to the people. The type of economic approach we need for our countries should be based on people's initiative, people's participation, and people's planning.

Now we come to the political element. Politics are too concentrated in the hands of a few in the world today. Decision making is done by a coterie of people and you call it a party system. This had led to a situation where vast masses of people are unable to participate in day-to-day decision making. This has resulted in a lot of frustration, violence and alienation of the people from the Governments. How can we set about bridging these gaps using modern technology?

Our technology is so advanced today that, we can get the participation of millions in the present day world in decision-making. So we have to think of a new political system. How can we bring power down to the ordinary people? How can we make the people participate? When we think of population, development or environment, how can we relate these ideas to the challenges we are facing?

On our part, we started a programme with help from WAY, in 1967. Today, you will be happy to hear that we are working in over 6000 villages in the country. We have been building up in such a way that we have built processes and not organisations. Processes that can liberate people non-violently. These processes are working in different stages. It is very difficult to work in a Movement like this because this sort of pattern does not fit into the criteria and questionnaires that are prepared by aid giving agencies. So we have to generate the resources and the power from people themselves, not only for the sake of people from the poorer countries, but for the sake of the whole world. And with this in view, we have been working for 25 years and now I am about to give up all the organisational, financial and administrative roles I have played in the Movement for the past 25 years.

On the 4th of December, 1983, when I leave our Headquarters, I will cover nearly 1200 miles on foot for 140 days. Why is this, during this period of jets and fast cars? Specially

when we are living in a so called "open economy" - an economy open to the rich because the poor with whom I am working have no access to this open affluence. Well, immediately after the July violence about 110 millionaires rushed to our Hqtrs., because they thought that the next round would be for them. So I told them "Help the poor, give up the western oriented, affluent life, help the poor because this is the only insurance against your own self-destruction." But, now only 3 people out of the 110 are left with us as the others feel that everything is back to normal and their exploitations can go on.

This is all nonsense. We have to think in terms of changing all human beings to be humane, whether they be rich or poor. My idea about this Peace Walk among the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and all other ethnic and religious groups, with the participation of 10,000 to 20,000 people every day, is to evoke this humanity within the people.

It is not the poor people who created these troubles. It is the elites. Elites create communalists. They create criminals by making the poor people frustrated. While there are people starving in refugee camps, the affluent drink coca-cola!

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, I thought that a personal sacrifice is necessary. That is why I am very happy that just before I venture on this task, I was able to revive my memories of WAY, where I remember we used to fast to collect money for people who were starving in Namibia. That old fighting spirit, though I am no longer qualified to be a member of WAY, being 52 years old, still brings back the youth in me and I am so happy I was able to meet my old friends. May I again welcome you to our beautiful island and also beseech you, please try to release a series of processes all over the world, which will be more powerful than the economic forces and the forces of war machinery released by Governments who believe that violence is the answer to the world's problems. Therefore, the challenge is ours!

## **BLAZING A PATH FOR THE WORLD'S POOR AND THE POWERLESS TOWARDS A NO - POVERTY SOCIETY**

### **Introduction**

I am grateful to the Schumacher Society for this opportunity given to me to deliver the Schumacher Lecture this year. My very special thanks should go to my dear friend Satish Kumar, who invited me to perform this task in spite of his knowledge about the inadequacy of my academic achievements compared to the high standards already set by the earlier speakers of this lecture series who were people of great intellectual attainment and philosophical eminence. Further I am honoured, and in a sense, inspired by the presence of George McRobie, the life-long friend and co-worker of Dr. Schumacher, who helped him show to the world that small was possible. I consider George not only as a friend very close to my heart, but as a great teacher of mine who guided me in many ways to do the small and beautiful things we are doing back home in Sri Lanka.

Before I come to the subject I have chosen to speak to you about this evening, namely, "Blazing a Path for the World's Poor and the Powerless - Towards a No-Poverty Society," I think it is appropriate that I make some remarks about my association with the late Dr. E.F. Schumacher.

I was born and bred in a village in Sri Lanka. As a youth, the more I came in contact with what is now generally known as modern urban life, the more I withdrew almost intuitively back into my rural-society with its lively Buddhist cultural values. I increasingly believed that life can be meaningful and human fulfillment can be achieved only in small organised communities where social, political and economic life is guided by spiritual, moral and cultural values. Naturally this urge led me to India several times in the late fifties and early sixties to witness how Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan were translating the Gandhian ideals into concrete action through the Bhoodan-Gramdan Movement.

It was during this period that I had the good fortune to meet

briefly Dr. Schumacher both at the Gandhian Institute of Studies in Varanasi and the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi. But it was in early seventies when he visited our work in Sri Lanka that we became intimate friends. Subsequently I visited his home twice with my brother who was living in England at that time.

In February 1976, TOOL -An Appropriate Technology Organisation in the Netherlands, which was headed by another friend of mine, Ton de Wilde (who is presently the Executive Director of the Appropriate Technology International in Washington,) organised an international conference in Nijmegen. Dr. Schumacher was invited to deliver the keynote address and I was asked to make the first response after his speech. It so happened that Dr. Schumacher's flight from London was delayed and he couldn't make it in time for the opening address. I remember just five minutes before the congress opened he telephoned the President of the Congress, talked to him first, and then I was called to the telephone. In his inimitable voice he said, "It is you who will give the keynote and I will come and respond to what you say." My most vehement protests didn't work and the next minute I was speaking on a subject I hardly knew. A couple of hours later he was there, saw the video and responded to my remarks in such a manner that his thoughts on technology and development became an integral part of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and my own thinking from that day.

I met him last in Vienna at the International Voluntary Service Conference a few months before his untimely demise. He was telling me about declaring the following year a 'year of moratorium' from his work. As you and I now know he never did that. He couldn't do that. The demands from the world and the urgency within him to deliver his message to humanity was such that he passed away while on his mission. Now it is our task to pick up from where he left and continue the good work.

I believe that I can honour his name best by not referring to his epoch-making book *Small is Beautiful* and the other works that followed, but by sharing with you our experience in trying to realize some of his ideas in practice.

### **The Choice of the Poor**

I will refer only to one idea he expressed in an address he

delivered under the title "A Metaphysical Basis for Decentralisation."

".....I would suggest that possibilities for any real change, not in the talking but in the doing, can only come from small groups of people. In a sense we don't really need a theory of decentralisation. The dinosaurs will collapse under their own weight. Innovating minorities are always small and are ipso facto decentralised. If anyone of us still expects any real help from big powerful organisations, I suggest he is wasting his time. These organisations are big and powerful precisely because they are not, in this sense, innovating. So the best thing to do is to forget them, or even better, if you are clever enough, to use them as milk cows."

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, from whose twenty-six year old experience I am speaking to you, is one such innovative effort by small groups of people living in over seven thousand rural communities in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya Shramadana means Awakening of All through mutual Sharing.

In our work we have come across four categories of people according to the life-styles they value. Firstly, those who are affluent and powerful and believe in wealth and power to be the end purpose of life, secondly, those who aspire to achieve wealth and power in the belief that that is the way to a fuller life, thirdly, those who have achieved these but are still unhappy and looking for alternative modes of simpler living, and fourthly those who are poor and powerless but are quite satisfied if they are able to attain a No-Poverty Society in which they can live as free human beings within their cultural milieu.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana is a Movement of the poor, by the poor for the Awakening of All, not excluding the awakening of the people belonging to the above mentioned first three categories. We commence our work with the most deprived in our societies and totally depend on their leadership to initiate the processes that will lead to a post-modern society. As the well known Gandhian scholar, the late Prof. Sugatha Das Gupta mentioned, our effort is not to build an alternative society but to proceed from the old society, that is from where we are, to a post-modern society in a continuum. We have named this a no-poverty society and we

propose to by-pass the modern society which we believe is neither sustainable nor possible for all people in the world to attain.

The main tasks of the Movement as experienced during the last twenty six years are as follows:

- ☐ Assist communities to re-affirm their faith in their traditional value systems as far as their relevance to their present-day realities of life are concerned;
- ☐ Strengthen their community participatory systems with appropriate technological skills enabling them to plan-out and implement their own felt-need satisfaction programmes;
- ☐ Assist community organisations to get incorporated as legal entities thus enabling them to get the maximum benefits in the realization of their human rights in the economic and political life of the nation;
- ☐ Organise lateral networks of their own independent units at different levels of the administrative system of the country enabling them to exert an influence on the decision-making processes by concrete examples; and
- ☐ Establish fraternal relationships with organisations and movements with similar objectives for mutual support.

We believe that these processes of self- development, thus promoted at the level of the individual, the family, the rural and urban communities the world over, will evolve themselves into a global movement so decisive that the present monocultural suicidal trend in our world can be radically changed.

I do not think that the present giant transnational organisations, be they political, industrial, commercial, monetary, technological or any other, can be made to act on the realization that a close relationship exists between the way their structures function and the increase in poverty, crimes, armed conflicts, wars, ecological destruction and cultural degeneration and so on going on in our societies. All these organisations seem to be controlled mostly by the first category of people I mentioned. Therefore, there is nothing significant that could be achieved, as Dr. Schumacher rightly said, by appealing to them or placing before them facts

and figures which we sometimes think they are unaware of. They know all that much better than we do. They simply have become the prisoners of what the present systems have created in the form of institutionalizing the baser instincts of man such as greed and illwill. When the inherent contradictions in these systems begin to hurt them seriously, only then will they think of the massive suffering that other human beings in the world are going through today. If this painful experience does not come too late for them, basic groups such as Sarvodaya may still be able to help them to join hands with the rest of the humanity to build a more just, sustainable and peaceful society. If the realization comes too late, then we have to allow them to face themselves the consequences of universal laws of cause and effect.

What about the second and third categories of people, namely, those who aspire for affluence and have not yet fulfilled their desires, and those already affluent but are dissatisfied with what this has to offer by way of happiness? As far as the Sarvodaya Movement is concerned we try to accommodate them and assist them to change their world view and life styles and, if they are prepared to make the sacrifice, to join hands with us to build a no-poverty-society.

So the choice before the world and the poor in particular, is very clear. The task of building the new society, the post-modern society, is clearly the responsibility of the people who are poor and powerless and yet who have the intelligence and insight to realize the barrenness of a consumer-oriented, mass production, violent society. The poor and the powerless paradoxically enough are the least confused and perplexed.

### **The Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka**

The Sarvodaya Shramadana effort in Sri Lanka did not begin with a ready made theory which we had only to practise. It was a long and arduous journey which we travelled, and still are travelling making as intelligent responses as we possibly could to the challenges we faced as we went along.

Firstly, as young teachers and students we wanted to broaden our learning experience by going into the villages where our economically poor, socially depressed, and politically ostracised brothers and sisters lived. We combined our learning experience

with a service component where we attempted to help improve their living conditions by sharing our labour and other resources we could find. I remember that there were over two hundred communities at that time who were considered to be 'backward communities' owing to the so-called 'low' castes to which they were born. This was our first area of 'study-service.'

I also remember very vividly how these communities were objects of sociological study for some western-educated Sri Lankan scholars who wrote books and theses after careful analysis of their caste origins and other matters such as inter-relationships, but never cared to help these people to be subjects of their own destiny. As young people we went to these academics for guidance and assistance to help these people lift up themselves by their own efforts. These academic brahmins asked us to approach them through the proper channels, namely, through the heads of the Education Ministry. The bureaucracies of the educational authorities were also closed to us at that time as we were taking education away from the classroom, text books and examinations to the 'prohibited' area of the real life of the people.

The study component of our programme was, and is, not for academic purposes. It is to help awaken our own personalities to the fullest potential in this life. Whatever knowledge we gain in the process is incidental and it helps us to be wiser in life. Such personality awakening takes place only through real life experience. During this first phase of the Movement we managed to interest over 350,000 people, mostly youths, to participate in hundreds of Shramadana (mutual sharing of labour) camps in all parts of the country where people of diverse ethnic, religious and racial composition lived. We realized that Shramadana was an excellent means to help people to realize respect for all life, engage in compassionate actions, learn to discover the joy of service to fellow beings and develop an attitude of mind where gains and losses are faced with considerate behaviour. Of course, the other positive benefits such as leadership development, building psychological bridges among people and numerous physical infrastructural activities such as building roads, school-buildings, community halls, wells, toilets and so on were no less important. During this ten year period the Movement did not receive any local or foreign funding except some random

assistance mainly from villagers themselves. Even today the main investment of the Movement is labour and service given free to Sarvodaya programmes by thousands of people.

The second phase of the Movement was a community development programme. We began with a hundred selected villages. All aspects of integrated village development were carried out by village people themselves and the Movement came in with additional volunteers, training components and whatever other material inputs it could find from outside. It is at this stage, that is, nearly fourteen years after the inception of the Movement, that some foreign developmental organisations such as OXFAM (UK) came in to support us. Our principal input, however, was the resources of the people themselves and the effort put in by the willing hands from outside the village. By the end of 1972 we were working in well over 1000 villages in our country.

The third phase of the Movement started around this time when we came to realize by practical experience that what was necessary was a total change in our understanding of development and the strategies and methodologies we were using, not only within the Sarvodaya Movement but also in other governmental and global approaches. We also realized that during our long period of struggle and interactions with both local and foreign development thinkers, practitioners, administrators and our partners that the path to a more just and peaceful life for our people, whether they are in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America or any other place should be through an awakening process taking place in thousands of groups all over the globe. Together we should awaken at the level of the individual person, the family, the village and the urban community. Then and only then nations and the world as a whole could awaken. This awakening should be total integrating within it the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political life of man and society.

Sarvodaya is not offering a monocultural formula for all the ills in the world. On the other hand by sheer hard work it has released an integrated series of processes in the above manner in over 7000 village communities out of 23,000 in Sri Lanka involving the lives of over two and a half million people. In each village a programme based on self-reliance, community participation and a simple plan decided upon by the people

themselves is implemented. From pre-school children, through school-going children, youths, mothers, farmers and other adults activities are planned and implemented. A village level Sarvodaya Shramadana Society is organised in due course and legally registered with the government. These societies then have opportunities to engage themselves in economic activities which benefit the village people. Also the power of the people as a whole for collective action is strengthened in the processes of working together in a variety of fields that affect their lives.

The village in its basic needs satisfaction programme needs a variety of trained personnel; pre-school workers, health-care workers, nutrition workers, community-shop keepers, savings-credit organisers, rural technical service workers, agricultural promoters and so on. These workers are trained at divisional level, district level and national level development educational centres where around 2400 young people are given residential training at any one time. The headquarters of the Movement and several of the larger district centres cater to the needs of national level as well as the international level needs of the Movement. Most of the assistance the Movement receives is channeled into training of workers and strengthening of village level societies.

There are over two hundred foreign students at any one time working and learning in Sarvodaya projects around the country while 46 Sarvodaya youths are working in other developing countries in Asia and Africa in similar activities directly sponsored by the Sarvodaya Shramadana International or in co-operation with other fraternal organisations.

Sarvodaya has established close working relationships with several similar organisations around the world for experience exchange purposes and for mutual support. There are several international non-governmental organisations supporting the Movement in various ways. There are also several inter-governmental organisations and three governmental organisations co-operating with Sarvodaya projects and programmes without infringing on our freedom.

This is briefly the history and the present status of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka.

## A Holistic Approach

Sarvodaya was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Buddha. We always considered the thought of the "Well being of All" to be central to our work. Therefore from the inception of the Movement we rejected narrow sectarianism and worked with and for all, irrespective of their ethnic, religious or racial background. We were careful not to confine the participation in our Movement only to Buddhists or limit its services exclusively for Buddhist communities. From the beginning non-Buddhists participated in our work as equals and about thirty percent of the villages where we are working at present are inhabited mostly by people who are Hindus, Muslims or Christians. I mention this fact because there are deliberate and mischievous attempts made by some arm-chair critics to convey a false view of our religious stand.

Writing a foreword to his classical work *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* in 1908 Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy says:

"What are the conditions necessary to the existence of a worthy art? Let us first enquire what conditions forbid its existence in the modern West. They may be summed up in the words commercialism and irreligion."

He continues later in the same foreword:

".....A society which sees wealth in things rather than in men, is ultimately doomed. It appears, therefore, that it is absolutely essential that mechanical production in the future be, not abandoned, but controlled in the real interests of humanity. If this appears to be impossible, as I am unwilling to believe, it must be admitted that civilization is not much better than a failure; for it is not much good being more ingenious than our forefathers if we cannot be either happier or better."

In our present affluent societies not only in art but in every department of life irreligion and commercialism play the dominant roles. We need a dynamic spiritual revival in religion and a radical replacement of commercialism with a more value based system for exchange of goods and services. I do not have a formula to place before you as to how to achieve this. But I have no doubt that the way for a happier and better life for mankind lies in a holistic approach to life and society where spiritual and

material development take place harmoniously. And this approach still prevails very strongly in less materially developed societies and they should be our starting points for building a new world society.

### **The Role of Technology**

Under different names, but with similar objectives, quite a large number of community-based movements are active in different countries both rich and poor. It is important that they reach consensus on and/or a unity of purpose in regard to general principles about the means used for economic development and political organisation at the level of basic communities whose choice for a no-poverty society I have been speaking about so far. The role of Technology in this exercise is of critical importance.

In the world today, the role of technology in economic development is rapidly changing. In the 1960s and early 1970s technology was focussed on transferring work from human energy to fossil energy. The increased productivity that resulted led to higher wages and cheaper goods. The society of the rich prospered as long as the increased production exceeded increases in the cost of fossil fuel energy. The high price of energy, and technical innovations in the field of micro electronics, have further changed the role of technology in society. Today technology development is directed to transferring work from human information to mechanical information stored in electronic components. This development drastically reduces labour requirements. In a recent speech, Francis Blanchard, the Director General, ILO, noted the following:

- ❑ A clothing manufacturer in the U.K. installed computer controlled equipment to lay and cut cloth. This cut the work force required from 200 to 2 persons and at the same time substantially reduced cloth wastage.
- ❑ A French firm installed robots to varnish cabinet doors. This saved 50% of the costs of varnish and reduced the number of operators from 100 to 6.
- ❑ In a Dutch warehouse, introduction of computerized stock control systems resulted in staff reduction from 300 people to 68.

The rapid application of micro-electronic development will destroy the comparative advantage several LCDs hold in labour intensive industries such as textiles, food processing, and electronics production. For example one of the industries developed at great cost in Sri Lanka, the garment industry had a certain advantage because of cheap skilled labour. In 1981, clothing exports of third world economies accounted for 41% of the world total and was worth 17,000 Million US Dollars. The application of micro-electronics to the clothing industry will shift this comparative advantage in only a couple of years to the industrialized countries, leaving millions of skilled and semi-skilled workers in the third world on what is now fashionably called 'extended holidays.'

The so called third world countries will never succeed in reversing this trend if they continue to depend on the western materialistic model of development, with its technologies and political and economic structures and their clever quantitative growth indicators. We are all familiar with the number game the IMF and the World Bank play with our economies. If countries like Sri Lanka were to obtain an economic growth rate in absolute terms in dollars comparable to the rich nations we would require an investment of capital that surpasses many times the amount of money currently available in the whole world. Those countries that followed the Western economic model now are in debt to the international financial system by over a trillion dollars!

With the publication of Dr. E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, the assumption on which the western economic development model was based namely that the best economic return can be achieved by investments in the most advanced technology regardless of the situation or context in which it is applied. The social or ecological consequences were seriously questioned in many quarters. In particular, planners and decision-makers, governments and development organizations responded by announcing politics that would channel part of their resources directly to the poor. Experiments began with various Integrated Rural Development projects. These were very encouraging at the conceptual level and, in effect, some integration between different sectors of rural development took place. Almost spontaneously dozens of Appropriate Technology Groups at the national and

international levels sprung up and tried to find new technologies that could be applied to sustainable development. Unfortunately, lack of legally constituted and decentralized decision-making instruments directly controlled by the poor people themselves, prevented the benefits from reaching them and also prevented the spiritual and cultural aspirations from becoming a part of the integrated development process. So the end result was that the already privileged people, like contractors, administrators, scholars and urban based business community and other elite groups, continued to benefit from the new infrastructural work that was done.

The role of technology cannot be divorced from the direct control of the people who are benefiting from, it, their needs and environment and their conception of good life.

### **No- Poverty society**

The problems that industrial societies face are caused principally by the acceptance of the ideal of a materially affluent life style. To achieve this life style production had to be maintained at an increasingly efficient level using more and more advanced technology and non-renewable resources. Now it is apparent, even in industrial societies, that the benefits of such developmental approaches are accrued by only a small minority. Of course the social and environmental costs of such patterns of development, both for industrial societies as well as non-industrial societies, are well known. The choice of proceeding with this sort of development into the future is a matter that people in the industrial societies have to decide. Already we hear of alternative lifestyles, and alternative paths to development. Some of these alternatives have evolved into movements engaged in peace, ecological protection, environmental issues, anti nuclear endeavours.

As far as the poor communities are concerned, they do not have to look for alternative societies or models. They already are living in a society where use of non-renewable resources is minimal, damage to the environment is negligible and aspirations for an affluent living is unthinkable. If their societies are in disarray and their living standards are sub-human, the entire responsibility for that must not fall on them but on the managers of national and transnational structures who have controlled them for

many decades now.

Their liberation and human fulfillment cannot be achieved by violence both for cultural as well as other reasons. But they can be achieved by following a non-violent revolutionary path such as I briefly described, where the building of a no-poverty society will bring into full play the latent cultural wealth they possess.

This is the transformation of the old society to a new society in a continuum, bypassing and also avoiding the pitfalls of the modern society.

The global question before us is to how the movements working for an alternative society in the industrialized world and movements like Sarvodaya working for a no-poverty society can join hands to build a new dynamic world culture which can confront successfully the monstrous forces of organized greed, ill-will and ignorance?

Let us end with a word from Dr. E.F. Schumacher:

“We can live on a small fraction of what we are living on now, as the culture of poverty, wherever it has existed, has amply demonstrated. The great thing about the really optimistic pessimists is that they are not work shy and they do not stay at the level of talk, talk, talk. They actually get their hands dirty and do some work. Let’s hope we can all graduate to that class.”

## DWELLINGS FOR HUMANITY

About three years ago, a University teacher who is well versed in Eastern philosophy and for whom I have a great respect, came to me with a problem. The Government had allotted a block of State land close to the housing scheme in which he lived for the purpose of a slum clearance project. A number of families was to be brought there and settled soon after a low-cost housing scheme was completed for them. This would mean that their psychological and physical security would be lost and their children would be in danger of getting spoilt. Was it possible for Sarvodaya to intervene and do something to change the government's decision? Of course, my reaction was that they who were educated and well-to-do should consider this as a golden opportunity given to them by the government to contribute their services also to bring up that community to a desired 'cultured' level so that both groups could co-exist. He did not come back to me to talk on the subject again. But I appreciated his concern for his children with these new neighbours around, in spite of my own thinking on the subject.

Everyone speaks about the importance of solving the problem of housing of have-nots - but of course not on one's own land; not even close to it.

A young, ambitious and clever community development organizer who served the Sarvodaya Movement came to me one day and asked for an increase in his living allowance. He wanted his children to be admitted to a private school where they could learn in the company of children who spoke English at home. In order to enable his children to reach a higher social class, he needed more income. Yet he was a committed community development worker who always publicly advocated the need for improving the conditions of the rural schools.

Here again a great disparity between word and deed: some strange inherent fear of other human beings seemed to haunt him.

A few years ago, a very enthusiastic Dutch volunteer who was

studying architecture in a university in Holland wrote to us asking permission to come and work as a volunteer in a 200 hectare co-operative farm owned by Sarvodaya. We obliged. He wanted to put up a low-cost model house in our farm which could be replicated in other dry zone villages. He had designed a lot of such houses on paper and had perhaps constructed models in his laboratories. After we observed how he was unsuccessful in making any progress with it for several weeks, and purely to give him a psychological satisfaction, we arranged the services of a village architect-cum builder to complete the construction. To this day, house, named by the members of the farm "Hans's Folly," stands there in the middle of the farm amidst many other locally designed, cheaper and more appropriate houses. The special thing about his model house was that nobody was willing to occupy it for more than a couple of weeks. Now it is used as a not so low cost tool store when his travel expenses are also taken to account.

In our countries there are a lot of such 'model houses', model windmills, model bio-gas generators, model irrigational canals, model energy conservation villages, etc. which were built at great cost. Some of these were funded by reputed UN specialised agencies and other similar bodies. I am sure the 'donor countries' would also have in their libraries volumes and volumes of such success stories about the making and working of these models, co-authored by post-graduate students and their supervisors. They were mostly very expensive experiments whose benefits hardly came to the people for whom they were meant. On the other hand, I think these experiments also contributed significantly to the debt burden of poor countries of the world. Please do not think that I am against research or experimentation. I am trying to bring home a point that I consider to be fundamental for all these activities if they are to serve a constructive purpose for the people who have no roof over their heads.

Human fulfillment, I believe, should be the guiding objective of all our endeavours, particularly for socially planned projects and programmes which are designed to satisfy the basic needs of people such as "Dwellings for Humanity". This is the reason why I added the words "With A View To Total Human Fulfillment" to qualify my remarks on this subject of "Dwellings for Humanity."

When discussing a Basic Human Need such as dwellings we have to relate it to other basic needs of people and also to the secondary and tertiary needs of communities and nations. In other words, an integrated approach has to be made in which their material needs are satisfied, their understanding about the meaning of life and its relation to the universe is awakened, their human inter-relationships between members of the family and the ever-increasing circles of the community are facilitated and enhanced, their control over what happens around them is ensured and their self-expression in love and care, fraternity and sharing, find a suitable psycho-physical environment to flourish. In other words, there is much more to it than matters pertaining to mere technology or economics.

The problem of housing is faced by poor people who live in rural areas and urban shanties, slums and such other congested places. Housing is only one of the problems they face. In fact, these people are caught in a vicious circle of landlessness - homelessness - hunger-poverty- disease - illiteracy - unemployment - crimes and such other economic and social difficulties. These have a self-multiplying nature and unless, with people's total participation, a constructive reverse cycle of processes is released to work in the opposite direction, it is quite possible that even a well planned and implemented project to provide dwellings soon turns out to be the causal factor for worse human situations.

Let us broaden our perception from human dwellings: basic human needs and integrated approaches to break the vicious cycle, to the more fundamental realities that humanity as a whole faces today. No human problem beyond a certain level and specially at national and global levels can be discussed today without reference to the ultimate purpose of human life itself.

Even the poorest of the poor are endowed with an inner capacity to understand in their own simplistic way the meaning of their existence, the values and practices upon which peace and harmony can prevail among themselves as well as with nature, in spite of the exploitative forces that disturb even that equilibrium, and possible ways and means of making their lives happier. In my experience I have seen an inversely proportional relationship between the level of joy in a poor community and the degree of

economic and political systems superimposed on them from outside. The biggest mistake most elites in our world make is to deny any thinking-power and intelligence to the poor. They forget the fact that millions and millions of the less privileged people in the world are still heirs to a spiritual and cultural inheritance, coming not from artificial and affluent societies as we see today, but from "no-poverty societies" of the days gone by. It was in those societies that people did possess a meaning and purpose to life and living that was much more profound than the mere accumulation of material goods and idle time. It was in those societies that great works of art and architecture flourished.

While affluent societies exert power over poor societies through commercial, military, communications and other media, the latter have to make a more serious contribution in deciding the direction in which humanity should develop if all are to avert nuclear, ecological, or other such devastations. Therefore, it becomes imperative that in determining objectives, technologies, resources and structures that will be used to solve human problems, including that of dwellings, all people, irrespective of their material or social status should participate as equals.

How is this possible? I believe that the first step should be to accept the fact that social, political and economic advancement of people in a quantitative sense is meaningless, and even unachievable for all, unless efforts for such improvement are closely associated with the qualitative life of people in their spiritual, moral and cultural attainments.

Let me give an illustration of what I mean. The three greatest events in the life of Lord Buddha, which we as Buddhists celebrate on the full-moon day of Wesak in the month of May every year, did not take place inside His palace. He was born in a flower garden in Kapilavastu (in Nepal) while His mother was on the way to her ancestral palace for the confinement. He attained Enlightenment and became the Supreme Buddha under a Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya (in India) and He passed away (attained 'Maha Parinirvana,' as we call it) in an orchard in Kushinara (in India). After attaining Supreme Enlightenment one of the first joyous utterances of the Buddha was:

“Through many a birth in existence wandered I,  
Sorrowful but not finding, the builder of this house.  
Sorrowful is repeated birth.  
O housebuilder, thou art seen.  
Thou shalt build no house again.  
All thy rafters are broken. Thy ridgepole is shattered.  
Mind attains the Unconditioned. Achieved is the end of  
Craving.”

The late Ven. Narada Maha Thero, the world renowned Buddhist scholar and missionary monk explained these joyous words uttered by the Lord Buddha on the very day of His Enlightenment thus:

“The Buddha admits His past wanderings in existence which entailed suffering, a fact that evidently proves the belief in rebirth. He was compelled to wander and consequently to suffer, as He could not discover the architect that built this house - the body . In His final birth, while engaged in solitary meditation which He had highly developed in the course of His wanderings, after a relentless search He discovered by His own intuitive wisdom the elusive architect, residing not outside but within the recesses of His own heart. It was craving or attachment, a self-creation, a mental element latent in all. How and when this craving originated is incomprehensible. What is created by oneself can be destroyed by oneself. The discovery of the architect is the eradication of craving by attaining Arahantship, which in these verses is alluded as “end of craving.”

“The rafters of this self-created house are the passions, such as attachment, aversion, illusion conceit, false views, doubt, sloth, restlessness, moral fearlessness. The ridge-pole that supports the rafters represents ignorance - the root - cause of all passions. The shattering of the ridge-pole of ignorance by wisdom results in the complete demolition of the house. The ridge-pole and rafters are the material with which the architect builds the undesired house. With their destruction the architect is deprived of the material to re-build the house which is not wanted.”

“With the demolition of the house, the mind, for which there is no place in the analogy, attains the unconditioned state, which is Nibbana.”

I believe, my example of the destruction of the house that is within you and me, will make you understand what I meant by giving a spiritual foundation to development. We need a dwelling made of brick and mortar or wattle and daub or of any other material in order to facilitate our efforts to discover the housebuilder, who is at the root of all our suffering. So when people who belong to the old society in Sri Lanka build a house it is not an end in itself but only a means to an end. What is the end? The Cessation of all Suffering, the realization of Nirvana or unconditioned happiness. It is when Craving is completely eradicated, that one attains Nirvana.

I don't come from an affluent society. I come from a poor society if you measure ours from a material yard stick. On the other hand, if you leave out the so-called 'developed' minority in our society who have lost meaning and purpose in life beyond making money, acquiring power and position and endless pursuits after the pleasures of the senses, the silent majority of people have a meaning and purpose in life conditioned by their old culture. Isn't it strange that in ancient Sri Lankan society which had a highly developed science of architecture as evidenced by the archeological remains, there are no signs of any private residences built with that permanence having existed? All the structures are common buildings, such as stupas, shrine rooms, temples, palaces, libraries, hospitals, teaching institutions and baths. I believe that this is a clear example of a people with a certain philosophy and attitude to life which should be the core measure in determining how qualitatively developed a community is.

The monocultural attitudes that took root in the minds of our elites with the advent of commercialism blinded them to these qualitative realities in our old societies.

Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, in his classical work 'Mediaeval Sinhalese Art', published in 1907, vividly describes this phenomenon in the following words:

"In Ceylon, as in India, the direct and indirect influence of contact with the West has been fatal to the arts. The two most direct causes of this adverse influence have been the destruction of the organization of States - craftsmen, following upon the British occupation; and the subsequent systematic neglect, by British and Sinhalese alike, of a local architectural tradition. A

less direct, but equally sure and certain, cause of the decline of the arts has been the growth of commercialism, - that system of production under which the work of European machines and machine-like men has in the East driven the village weaver from his loom ("\*in euphemistic language, successfully contested the village weaver's market.") the craftsman from his tools, the ploughman from his songs, and has divorced art from labour. In the words of Blake:

"When nations grow old  
The arts grow cold,  
And commerce settles on every tree."

"In such grim fashion has commerce settled in the East."

"The Sinhalese people are not, in my opinion, happier or better than they were in the eighteenth century. Talk of progress, and the reality, are not the same. Civilisation is supposed to advance by the creation of new desires, to gratify which the individual must endeavour to improve his position. But in reality it is not quantity, but quality of wants that may be taken as evidence of progress in the Art of Living. No one acquainted with modern Sinhalese taste will pretend that it gives evidence of any improvement in the quality of wants. Indeed, it is sufficiently obvious that quantity, variety, and novelty are not really compatible with quality."

It is unfortunate that to this day, in spite of what the great exponents of qualitative life in our old societies, like Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, said, most of our modern writers dismiss these ideas as sentimentalism about a glorious past. They always look for that monocultural trend as if all communities in the world evolved on the same lines. So they always look for a justification from examples of social evolution in the West. They would interpret what I said about the Buddha, being born attaining Enlightenment and passing away close to nature as a suggestion that people of Sri Lanka prefer to live under trees, following the steps of the Buddha. I don't mean anything of the sort. What I mean is that "while people built, lived in, and possessed houses as a means to an end, they never gave a permanent and intrinsic value to a house to the extent that instead of your possessing the house, the house begins to possess you."

When travelling abroad sometimes kind friends from Sri Lanka

give me hospitalities. Mostly I have enjoyed their company. But there were times when I was most embarrassed and irritated and even very angry within, when I listened to their modernized wives and endured for hours and hours on end the minutest details of the prices of their houses, expensive lawns and gardens, the Persian carpets and antique furniture sets that adorn their artificial homes. In fact, one of them could not serve dinner until she showed me round all her possessions acquired abroad and finally made me lie down on her newly purchased water-bed! They sincerely believe that all Sri Lankan people can be provided with this 'civilized' standard of living of what I may call "the level of energy and resource consumption" if only the people and the government of Sri Lanka follow their example. Unfortunately all Sri Lankans cannot get international jobs. Neither do most desire that.

Lord Buddha himself recognized the fact that even monks who have given up household life in search of spiritual realization needed to satisfy certain basic human needs. In order of priority, He mentioned the need for clothing, food, shelter and medicinal requirements. Among the meritorious deeds a human being could perform, He mentioned the importance of gifting these to both monks and needy people. To this list were added the merit of making wells, water-ways for irrigation, roads, culverts and bridges, hospitals and teaching-places, and gardens with flowers, fruits or medicinal plants, which may be considered as secondary or community needs. The kings and other community leaders, therefore, gave leadership to the common people to get themselves organized to satisfy these needs both from the point of view of healthy and civilized living and also as means to eradicating selfishness which is at the root of unhealthy competition, hatred, violence and war. In short, there was a metaphysical base for all intelligent human actions, called 'Right Livelihood.'

Let us contrast this approach with a purely materialistic or mathematical approach to the problem. We can even call it a commercialistic approach. Create a want in people for a particular model of a house. It is immaterial whether the model is low cost or high cost as long as it maximises profit. For this purpose use all possible hidden persuasions. Create an opportunity for producers of houses or suppliers of building material to profit by it. Call it private enterprise or public housing as it suits the time and

occasion. When necessary, give them permits to cut down even virgin forests. Make people believe that it is the demand that regulates the supply and not the mass production backed by the most sophisticated technology that forces the market. Bring in mass media to deify very practical human beings like Mahatma Gandhi and Fritz Schumacher on the one hand, and on the other hand, get their worldly ideas such as production by the masses and appropriate technologies subtly ridiculed by flimsy arguments such as 'going against modern realities' and 'turning the clock back'. Academic brahmins can be hired for this purpose from developing countries themselves. Highlight the population explosion and idolize the small family. Prof. Johan Galtung once called this modern panacea the one-two-three-four formula of development. Aim at one wife, two children, three-roomed house and four-wheels (motor car). Such families are developed!

In this confusion, masses of people can remain where they are, with a few exceptions of clever ones of course, who will climb up, while the privileged in societies can enjoy their power, wealth and position for some more time. But a time-bomb hangs over both due to the divergent directions in which forces of mind and matter are made to move.

We cannot any longer consider problems of human beings in isolation. If some people do not have food, clothing and shelter, it is not only a problem of theirs. It is more a problem of those who have these, for they are the ones who have increasingly managed human, material, natural, capital, technological and structural resources of the world from the times of the industrial revolution. In human societies how can this realization of solidarity come about?

If this realization of openness of humanity does not come about, what will be the plight of all life on this planet Earth?

The chances are that the so-called materialistic societies wherever they exist, will not give up their individual or collective proprietary rights and privileges. Rather, they will attempt to lift up the less 'developed' societies conforming to their ideological framework to a higher level without giving up any of their privileged positions or reducing in any significant manner their consumption wants. Centrism, high technology, large scale production and uniformity will be their salient features. These

societies are bound to be crushed by their own top-heavy nature. It is risky to depend on these societies as path finders to the twenty first century. They may pave the way to the destruction of the world before the turn of the century unless the old world bypasses them in a continuum to a post-modern society in the interest of humanity as a whole.

The values of old societies are different. In their 'small' world the concept of the 'Well-being of All,' the 'Awakening of All' or what we call Sarvodaya is well understood. They believe in non-violence, sharing, smallness, decentralization, relevant technologies, production by the masses and unity. Their direction is towards sustainable and simple life-style. Their aim is not an affluent society. Instead, they want to live a no-poverty society. The problem of dwellings and other basic human needs are most acute in these societies. They have the capacity to solve these problems by their own efforts if the obstacles that stand in their way are removed.

During the last thirty years I have known many housing projects which were initiated in my country as well as in other countries. They did not bring the expected benefits to the people for they had no hand in determining the concept behind the projects, locations, designs, materials, techniques and other related matters. We have a saying that "We build the road and the Road builds us." Similarly, we must remember that "while we build the house, the house builds us." This is not only true for individuals or families but is equally relevant to rural and urban groups and communities.

The UN General Assembly, at its 37th session, proclaimed 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The origin of this resolution was when Hon. R. Premadasa, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, made a statement to the General Assembly Meeting at its 35th session in 1980. Now he has launched a Million Houses Programme in Sri Lanka placing his confidence in people and their ability to solve their own problems with their own resources and technologies. He is attempting to limit the role of the central government to that of a facilitator that helps people's initiative and efforts which are mobilised through their own Village Re-awakening Councils. I think this is a step in the right direction and it deserves all encouragement and support as it will

empower people to awaken together with what they know and what they have.

In poor communities, most people have to build their own houses or do it through community labour. They will never be able to rely on foreign agencies or even governments for material, organisation or even capital. The technology and the capital must therefore be easily available to ordinary people who have little formal education. Whatever model is introduced, it must have social acceptability. Whatever means are used to introduce a new house, it must be done in a way that takes into full consideration the culture, attitudes, and experiences of villagers in all spheres.

According to the philosophy I hold, dwellings and other related basic needs have to be satisfied as a pre-requisite for total personality awakening. Personality awakening can take place only in a psycho-physical environment which is provided fundamentally by the family. The home is where all family decisions are made, and a house is not necessarily a home. A cluster of houses is not necessarily a community. As much as we should aim at personality awakening of the individual, so should we aim at the awakening of the family, the village and urban communities and finally the national communities and the world community.

Such total awakening can take place if our planning, technologies and organisational structures are harmonized with human qualities such as loving-kindness, compassionate actions, altruistic joy, equanimity, sharing, pleasant language, constructive activity and equality in association.

The real challenge before the scientist, the technologist, the architect and other knowledgeable persons of the world in my humble opinion, is not one of resources and technologies. It is rather a challenge they have to face within their own personalities. Are they prepared to discover "the builder of the house" within themselves and be free to do truly creative and innovative work that will help millions of people without dwellings to build homes while reviving and strengthening their human qualities?

## COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

It is a well known climatological fact that tropical areas around the globe are frequently affected by devastating natural calamities such as cyclones, floods and earth slips, etc., and consequently severe damage is caused to human life and property. What makes this problem more severe is the fact that almost all the countries in the tropics belong to the poor third world group, and they are not in a position to sustain such serious and more or less frequent damage to their peoples and economies. Depending largely on foreign help is by no means a solution to the problem. Moreover, it is doubtful if such help would continue in the years to come, due to the problems faced by the donor countries themselves. Has there ever been any attempt to prepare communities to prevent and minimize the adverse effects of such hazards? Who can organise communities to fight such disasters?

The Sarvodaya Movement strongly believes that the solution for this problem, to a great extent lies in the hands of the very people who become victims of natural calamities. In this paper, I have made an attempt to describe briefly the Sarvodaya experience in this connection for the past twenty-five years, and in that context, to highlight some basic components which should essentially be included in any programme at national level to prepare communities to face natural disasters.

Sarvodaya had its first experience of a major disaster way back in 1965 when waves and cyclones played havoc in the Mannar district. In fact the immediate reliefwork and rehabilitation programmes undertaken subsequently by the Movement at this early stage took the form of a donor-recipient relationship, rather than the affected community getting involved actively in organising relief and rehabilitation work. Besides, the affected communities were neither organised nor motivated for such activities, prior to the disaster. This experience necessitated community preparedness for disasters or in other words, to keep the community prepared to prevent and minimize the adverse

effects of a disaster. Is it possible or practical to prepare a community only to face natural disasters or in other words, could a disaster preparation programme survive in isolation? Our experience has been that such a programme would be much more effective if it is made an integral part of a general development programme carried out by the community. The biggest disadvantage of such a programme existing in isolation would be the loss of enthusiasm and motivation in the community between the periods of disasters. This situation itself will prevent people from participating in preparatory activities.

In 1978 Sarvodaya communities were prepared to a certain extent to face a major cyclone which devastated the Eastern Province and some parts of the Northern Central Province, since they had established development activities with a disaster relief component in them. However, such major disasters take place only in a relatively long period and emphasis should be focussed on medium and small scale disasters which take place more often.

In this context, it is clear that community organisation and institutionalization of related activities is vitally important to prepare communities for disasters. What is more relevant is the integration of disaster preparation to a broader development programme which involves the entire community. On the other hand there were many instances where disaster relief and rehabilitation work has been used by the Movement as entry points into communities to mobilize them for development activities subsequently. Community preparation for disasters is necessarily continued with their development programmes.

Once such a development programme with institutionalized participation is underway, it is much easier to create awareness among the masses directly and indirectly on the necessity to prevent disasters at first. Promoting the idea of environment protection and conservation will not only create awareness in the communities, but will also reduce the magnitude of adverse effects of disasters. In addition, programmes to protect and plant trees, conserve soil, etc., will directly and indirectly increase production and incomes. Sarvodaya believes that human beings are a part of nature, and therefore, have to come to terms and live in harmony with nature. It would be useful to study how people in the past maintained this balance still fighting nature. For instance, the

massive net-work of irrigational canals and tanks built in the dry zone, has never been the cause of any major disaster.

A suitable environment being one of the basic needs of any community, they must be motivated and mobilized to conserve it by protecting nature's life supporting system. 1. Air, 2. Water 3. Soil 4. Plants (edible and medicinal) 5. Trees 6. Animals 7. Fish and, 8. other living organisms. Creating an awareness at a national level would call for a methodology which includes not only national scale propaganda through media, but practical community programmes in every village which involves children and youth in particular. It is equally important to identify functional leadership in the communities and train it so that it could continue disaster preparation as well as development activities in the community. Sarvodaya does not believe that leadership imposed from above can ever solve the problem of communities. Leadership must emerge from the community itself. According to Sarvodaya's programme, functional leaders are supposed to be selected by the community itself in order to secure acceptability and avoid conflicts. Those who are recruited to undergo training in community work, must have shown proof of organizing capabilities, commitment to the principles of the Movement and above all must have the acclamation of the village community. Training related to disaster relief includes leadership skills, first aid, environmental conservation, primary health care and government extension services etc.

Among the ways and means to minimize the adverse effects of disasters, technology plays an important role. Improving the techniques and methods used for survival by people in their day-to-day life will reduce the adversity of effects. Technologies which are appropriate for local conditions and adopted by similar communities in other parts of the world can be experimented in areas where existing technologies are either primitive or too sophisticated. For instance recently, with the assistance of a certain foreign technical assistance group Sarvodaya developed a low cost but cyclone-proof house in the Northern Central Provinces of Sri Lanka. Appropriate Ayurvedic Medical technology promoted by Sarvodaya instead of expensive western medicines is another example.

These requirements of a national programme aimed to prepare

communities would call for the involvement of voluntary organisations to organise programmes with communities. It is understandable that the government has its limitations, when it comes to community mobilisation. On the other hand, NGO's can function as intermediaries between the government and target groups by utilizing available government inputs for such efforts. The time has come for the third world policy makers to think that disaster work should no longer be ad-hoc relief campaigns, but anticipated and well planned out with the participation of communities.

### **Conclusions:**

In this short paper an attempt has been made to bring together the following components any disaster programme should include.

1. To mobilize all members of a community by divisions of age groups
2. To integrate disaster programmes to the general development programme
3. To create awareness in the community on the relevance of environment protection
4. To train functional leaders to prepare communities
5. To adopt appropriate technologies, and,
6. To utilize NGO's to function between government and participant beneficiaries.

## RELIGIOUS YOUTH AND DEVELOPMENT

I always consider it a great honour whenever I am called upon by the Rissho Kosei-Kai to perform any service which would help further their cause for peace and development. Twice, last year, I had the joy of seeing their youth in action and I was very inspired. I would like to remember on this occasion and to pay my respect to their great founder and leader Rev. Nikkyo Niwano and wish him a long life to continue his service to humanity.

I would also wish to express my appreciation and congratulations to Bataan Christian Youth Civic Circle and Focolore Movement of the Philippines for hosting and co-sponsoring this youth congress which will certainly further their already existing friendship and also carry it to the youth of other neighbouring countries such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, India and Sri Lanka.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not mention how much indebted I am to this country. It is here that I received the first international recognition for the work I was doing to promote well-being and harmony among human beings. Sixteen years ago the Republic of the Philippines conferred on me the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership.

The first thing that has struck me about this congress is that it is a gathering of young people who believe in religion. Secondly, they profess different religions and believe that they can co-exist, and together contribute towards building peace and promoting human welfare. What I am asked to do is to deliver the keynote address on the theme "Religious Youth in Development and Peace."

Nowadays, when we talk of development rarely do we think of religion. We are used to thinking more in terms of science and technology, industrialization and commerce, investment and production, growth and markets and so on. By the same token we are used to talking about controlling nature, conquering time and

space, economies of scale and so on. At the end of this exercise when we look at what remains as the final result we see increased poverty, malnutrition, disease, stockpiles of lethal weapons, polluted air, land, water and even seas, social unrest, political rivalries leading to crimes and armed conflicts, civil wars and military regimes and so on. A terrible degeneration indeed!

On the other hand if we try to relate religion to development, the concept of development goes into a completely different dimension. Then we have to look at development as an awakening process -a process by which both material needs and spiritual aspirations can be fulfilled. We will no longer place productivity, growth, resource mobilization, technology, markets and such other material arrangements on a supreme pedestal and push to the insignificant backyard spiritual virtues such as compassion, sharing, contentment, co-operation, and joy of living. In my presentation whenever I use the word development, therefore, what I really mean is an awakening process taking place within individuals, families, groups of families, communities, and even bigger groups such as national communities and the world community.

Such an awakening process where the human being is at the centre, has to have certain characteristics which distinguish it from numerous other activities going on around us in the name of development. Let us try to identify some of these characteristics so that in our work we also do not contribute to the already existing chaotic situation in the world but rather try to reverse or change the course of our civilization towards a more peaceful and sustainable human situation.

In Buddhist teachings it is explained that the root causes of all suffering within man and society are Greed (Loba), Aversions (Dosa) and Ignorance (Moha). Therefore, to the extent human beings engage themselves in activities that lead to the increase within themselves of these evils, to that extent they will multiply their suffering. Western capitalistic societies are highly advanced in promoting these evils because they have institutionalised them in the form of an economy where 'possessive individualism' is the base, a defence system (or an attack system?) where fear and hate is the base and a materialistic ideology where irreligion is the base. I do not think there is much of a difference even in the other

non-capitalist Western half when one comes to think of the fundamentals on which they have founded their societies. We may have only to substitute 'possessive collectivism' for 'possessive individualism,' then this analysis fits both equally well.

Unfortunately this is the dominant trend in the modern world today, which is dominated by Western philosophy and to which both super-powers are contributing in their own way. One has to watch and see to what extent China, India and Japan would follow the same path or whether they will open up a new way for humanity where Non-greed (Aloba), Non-aversions (Adosa) and Non-ignorance (Amoha) are promoted in their social, economic and political programmes.

Loba, Dosa and Moha are evils that manifest themselves within us as individuals. What modern western civilization has done is to give these evils a corporate social dimension. Greed is institutionalised and a lot of philanthropists who own shares in multinational corporations are unaware that it was their impersonal collective greed that has brought about unprecedented poverty in the world. Aversions are institutionalised and peace-negotiators are unaware that it was their impersonal collected hatred of peoples and systems that have brought about loss of lives, deprivations and immense suffering. Ignorance is institutionalised and educators are unaware that it was their collective neglect of the intuitive wisdom of man that has brought about the present alienation of the human being from his own personality, his family and social environment and from his natural environment. The whole thing works as a vicious circle and the dominant civilization of the modern world which is western in origin has brought within its tentacles all of humanity using science and technology as its means.

The challenge that religious youth has to face is to develop an insight into this vicious circle and find and release an integrated series of processes in the nature of a constructive circle to re-establish forces of Sharing (Dana), Compassion (Metta), Morality (Sila), Meditation (Bhavana) and Wisdom (Panna). This has to be done both at the individual level and at the social level keeping in mind various national and international institutionalised forms that perpetrate violence.

Asia is said to be the cradle of all religions. So I believe that

the Asian youth gathered here is capable of deciding upon some of the common principles on which an on-going programme can be determined at this congress. I would like to place before you some of my ideas both in the area of principles and of a practice for your consideration. I have to seek your tolerance if you get a feeling that I am too Buddhistic in my approach but I must mention that my conception of Buddhism is that it is a way of life where there is absolutely no place for any sectarianism. A true Buddhist should try to live by the invocation:

“May all those who suffer overcome suffering,  
May all those who are in fear overcome fear,  
May all those who are in pain overcome pain,  
May all beings be well and happy!”

This is like a Buddhist Charter of Declaration of Rights of All Living Beings

### **The Principles**

We who believe in religion should strictly adhere to the Principle of Respect for All Life. I am mentioning here deliberately ‘all Life’ so as to include not only sentient beings which include the humans but also the plant kingdom. In his insatiable greed to produce for ever increasing sensual satisfactions man has already gone a long way to destroy systematically the seen as well as unseen living beings and plants. The outcome is the imbalance we are facing in our eco-systems and our bio-systems and the inevitable consequences humanity as a whole has to face today. When we go into the root cause of this insane situation it is nothing but our gradual degeneration into a frame of mind that believes we humans are the only beneficiaries of everything that nature has to bestow upon us without an equal obligation to protect everything that comes within the bounds of living and non-living nature.

While the high priests of science and technology have not so far enunciated an all embracing principle for us to follow on this subject just listen to how Lord Buddha beseeches us to protect all living beings in his discourse on Universal Loving Kindness (Karaniya Metta Sutta)

1. He who is skilled in (working out his own) well-being, and who wishes to attain that state of Calm (Nibbana) should

act thus: He should be dexterous, upright, exceedingly upright, obedient, gentle and humble.

2. Contented, easily supportable, with but few responsibilities, of simple livelihood, controlled in the senses, prudent, courteous, and not hanker after associations with families.
3. Let him not perform the slightest wrong for which wise men may rebuke him. (Let him think:) 'May all beings be happy and safe, May they all have happy minds.'

4&5 Whatever living beings there may be - feeble or strong (or the seekers and the attained), long, stout, or of medium size, short, small, large, those seen or those unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born as well as those yet to be born - may all beings have happy minds!

6. Let him not deceive another nor despise anyone anywhere in anger or ill-will. Let him not wish another ill.
7. Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.
8. Let him radiate boundless love towards the entire world - above, below and across-unhindered, without ill-will, without enmity.
9. Standing, walking, sitting or reclining, as long as he is awake, let him develop this mindfulness. This they say, is 'Noble Living' here.
10. Not falling into wrong views - being virtuous, endowed with insight, lust in the sense discarded - verily never again will he return to be conceived in a womb."

This sutra which was preached by the Buddha over 2500 years ago to a group of monks is very relevant to our modern world. We need a very strong psychological force of Loving Kindness that can permeate the entire psycho-sphere in human society to counter the aggressive forces of greed, hatred and ignorance that cloud our sanity and vision.

The second principle I would like to place before you is the Principle of Sharing. Sharing is the opposite of acquisition, exploitation, greed and such other base instincts in man. While

greed leads to aversions and competition, sharing can result in understanding and co-operation.

The practice of sharing has no limits. What I am doing now is sharing what I consider to be my thoughts and experiences useful to you -sharing my time, though and effort. You may even call this Shramadana as we do in Sri Lanka. We can extend this practice of sharing to every field of human activity-knowledge, land, wealth and so on.

Sharing is not the same as charity, or even giving aid. It is a principle in the practice of which there is an inner spiritual bond that is established between the participants transcending any material transactions that may have taken place. Sharing enhances the thought of the oneness of humanity and interdependence between human beings and human groups and communities. Sharing eliminates the false ideas of inferiority and superiority that may develop in the minds of people and initiate them into a deeper understanding of the human mind and thus help in the purification of the thoughts, which is the forerunner to constructive deeds.

So called aid programmes - under whatever names these are described such as development co-operation, transfer of resources, soft loans and so on- and whoever practises them from voluntary groups to governmental and inter-governmental agencies - lack a spiritual content. I have come across some religious organisations which engage themselves in so called development aid with a hidden agenda of proselytization of people who are poor and powerless. This is the worst imaginable form of irreligion or in other words an extension of blatant exploitative commercialism to the sectarian religious field. This is why I implore you to accept the Principle of Sharing as a part and parcel of the Principle of Respect for All Life in determining your programmes for mutual co-operation.

Thirdly, I would like to place before you a principle which we may call the Principle of Sustainability. Unless we are able to sustain the value systems in the spiritual, moral and cultural sectors (and the organisational and institutional arrangements in the social, economic and political sectors, conforming to those value systems), we cannot establish peace and harmony in our societies. In other words, in the same way that a human

personality cannot retain its sanity if there is no dynamic adhesion among its different physical, mental emotional, intellectual and spiritual parts similarly human societies cannot survive and progress with peace unless we establish a strong and dynamic equilibrium among all its component sectors.

I consider spirituality the essence of any religion. Religious practices devoid of spiritual content will bring more harm than good to oneself as well as others. One who is desirous of attaining higher and higher spiritual levels, abstains from evil, cultivates good and purifies one's mind. What do we mean by purifying your mind?

According to Buddhism, mind and form (nama and rupa) exist together having an interdependent relationship. When the form or our body exists in its physical manifestation we clean it, beautify it and pay lot of attention to it. But we hardly we hardly pay the same attention and care to our mind which is much more important as far as our happiness and self-fulfillment are concerned. The most terrible germ in our mind is placed when we alienate ourselves from others. To begin with it may commence with 'I, me, mine' discrimination against 'you, your, yours' and slowly start expanding this concept until there are more ideas, events and things alienating the 'I' from 'You' than those that bring the 'I' closer to 'You.' The bigger the 'I', the greater is the pollution of the mind.

When this alienation occurs from another person or a group of persons at the level of the mind in a human being, he or she begins to develop dislikes, enmities and in short all sorts of aversions about them. Now fear enters this mind, thinking that the other person would do harm. All sorts of wrong views now enter the mind, confusing the situation more and more. If the other person or persons also react in the same way then all the necessary prerequisites for a confrontation are satisfied. This is why it is said that "Wars begin in the minds of men."

A person who is fully aware of this inner defiling process of the mind, develops through constant meditation a defence mechanism within the mind so as not to get entrapped by alienations, aversions, fears and ignorance. On the other hand he or she will develop inner serenity and peace by constantly developing loving- kindness, compassionate actions, altruistic joy

and equanimity. Development of one's mind in this manner we call a self-purification process of spiritual awakening.

The immediate result of spiritual awakening is a change in one's attitudes to and relationships with others, to more humane and friendly levels. This is moral awakening which is certainly going to affect positively the much alienated relationships between parents and children, teachers and students, rulers and the ruled, producers or traders and consumers and so on. What is difficult to enforce even by law today, were normal patterns of social conduct during periods when people had spiritual goals to be realized through proper moral conduct. Abstinence from killing, stealing, adultery, lying and intoxication were a five-fold moral code which characterized the civilized societies of the past.

If we are truly religious, we cannot even for a moment dissociate our daily lives from spirituo-moral awakening. The western distinction between spiritual and secular lives is one of the principal causes of the tensions, injustices, crimes and wars that are rampant in the world today. Religion, I emphasise, not in its outer form or the label it carries, but in its spiritual essence cannot be separated from life itself. We have to live it.

What I understand by culture is the sum total or the aggregate of every thing - material and non-material, institutional and non-institutional, - that goes into satisfying our needs and makes life possible, sustainable, happy and peaceful. All the rest, that make life difficult, unsustainable, miserable and peace-less, I would call anti-culture.

The probing question that modern youth has to ask itself is whether the present world order we have, with its diverse religious, social, economic and political institutions does reflect a culture with its spiritual and moral ingredients or an anti-culture signalling further degeneration of human society, which may soon lead to the extinction of both the human race and all other living forms on earth? Asking the question is not enough. If the answer is 'It does reflect an anti-culture', then we have to think of ways and means of re-establishing our cultures in such a way that the Principle of Sustainability is respected.

The fourth principle to which I would like to draw your attention is the Principle of Continuity. More enlightened people in

industrialised societies are talking about an alternative society as they experience more and more hopelessness in their present situation and realize the dangers they face. In blind imitation of the West we also should not hurry to look for alternatives. On the contrary we should look within our own societies for those small groups and communities of people who still respect life, practise sharing and have sustained themselves in spite of the violent onslaughts of western materialistic culture. These societies still have a spiritual foundation and maintain dynamic relationships with members of their communities and nature in a mutually enriching and sustaining manner.

These societies are the pointers towards the twenty-first century. They are in a majority in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They were the targets of economic exploitation, political suppression, religious hypocrisy by imperialist as well as local national power-establishments. Even today they are the victims of the political power-game and vigorously promoted "market-forces". They are either made serfs in their own land cloaked in a modern garb, or forced to seek refuge away from their traditional lands. These are the communities who urgently need the intervention of both modern religious youth to prevent further destruction of their way of life and culture. This is important not only from the point of view of the survival with justice of these communities but also from the broader objective of the survival of civilized life based on spiritual and moral value-systems on this earth. In my opinion, modern scientific and technological knowledge, paradoxically enough, can come to be used exclusively for constructive purposes only if these communities are saved, strengthened and put at the centre of human affairs. This is where the Principle of Continuity has its important function.

The Principle of Continuity holds that it is not necessary for the majority of the people in the so-called Third World to aspire to reach the western model of development and when it is achieved then start looking for alternatives. Instead they can proceed in the direction of a new society starting from the old society itself in a continuum, by passing the modern society. We, in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, have accepted as our objective a No-Poverty No-Affluence Society and it is our

conviction that it is the pursuit of such an objective that we can practise effectively the four principles I have mentioned so far, namely, the Principles of Respect for All Life, Sharing, Sustainability and Continuity.

### **The Practice**

Next I want to express some thoughts about translating these principles into practice. We should be very clear in our minds about the beneficiaries of our efforts. We can put it in another way. What should be the immediate, the short term and long term effects of what we do, and on whom?

We should get over the patronising idea that we are the givers or benefactors and there are others in some other place who are going to be the receivers or beneficiaries. Always we have to remember that we are one human family, closely linked to and interdependent with other living beings, the plant world and the eco-system in general. We should not arrogate to ourselves a frame of mind in which we have any superiority over anybody or anything else in the absolute sense. So we are all participant-beneficiaries of whatever we are doing in the name of development, welfare or religion. Similarly, we cannot have anything in the absolute sense. We are only trustees of what we think we possess and that should be used constructively for the well-being and awakening of all.

What is awakening? We call Buddha as "The Awakened One." We believe that all human beings and in fact all living beings have the potential to attain Supreme Enlightenment that the Buddha attained. True that it is a long and arduous process that has to continue birth after birth with the one objective of perfecting the qualities of Beneficence (Sharing or Dana), Morality (Sila), Renunciation (Nekkhamma), Wisdom (Panna), Diligence (Viriya), Patience (Khanthi), Truth (Sacca), Determination (Adittana), Compassion (Metta) and Equanimity (Upekkha). Awakening in the ultimate sense is the attainment of the highest possible state of unconditional happiness.

This ideal like a beacon light shows us the direction in which we should guide our individual and collective life. It is interesting to contrast this with another prevalent ideal, or one may call it a practice, the western style capitalist edict: "Do unto others

before they do it unto you!" - A doctrine of fear that permeates all of western society with few exceptions!

So the first practice we should set our mind upon is what may be called Personality Awakening (Paurushodaya). To awaken one's personality, one should have one's basic needs satisfied. On an empty stomach it is not possible to develop one's mental capabilities. Similarly, lack of clothing, shelter, health care, educational and other basic facilities prevent a human being from thinking about spiritual attainments. Therefore, it is our duty as those who believe in religion to practise sharing with a view to creating a physical and social environment conducive to the personality awakening of all members of the community in which we live. This also means a life-long service to humanity as a means to achieve our own personality awakening.

Satisfaction of physical or social needs is not enough. We need lot of love, acceptance and psychological security from the time we get conceived in our mother's womb. Primarily this need is satisfied at the level of the family. One of the serious shortcomings of modern society, which is also a principal reason for a great deal of crime, alcoholism and drug addiction is the break-down of traditional family life. Just like there is no better substitute for mother's milk there is no other social organisation that can replace the family. The family is a universal phenomenon. It is common to all cultures. In the same way that there cannot be a biological organism without cells, there cannot be a community without families. Therefore, I suggest that our second objective in a practical programme should be Family Awakening (Kutumbodaya).

The third dimension in which we should design our work should be the community. By the community I mean a group of families who live in the same geographical area, sharing many things in common. What is most important here from our point of view is the personal contacts and attitudes developed among the members of a community. The size may be anything between fifty and hundred people and one thousand to one thousand five hundred people. We have to plan for their Community Awakening. When it consists of rural communities we may call it Village Community Awakening (Gramodaya) and when it consists of urban communities we may call it Urban Community Awakening

(Nagarodaya).

The spiritual, moral and cultural regeneration of mankind, according to our convictions based on practical experience, can be successfully launched and sustained at these three levels, namely at the level of the individual, the family and the community. The social, economic and political realities in each locality and country will determine the type of detailed plans, programmes, relevant technologies and institutional structures that have to be built up to give concrete shape to the above mentioned practices.

I think it is a mistake for voluntary or non- governmental organisations motivated by religious principles to accept without questioning macro-development formulae presented to us from time to time by governmental and inter-governmental organisations. How many of them among tens of thousands of international civil servants serving even in United Nations agencies believe that 'you cannot expect to change the world before you change yourself?' As far as we who believe in religion are concerned, we begin on the premise that change has to begin within ourselves. We say 'We build the road and the road builds us.'

Even their micro-development formulae are mostly aimed at subserving the macro-approach. I do not believe that macro-plans and high technology can contribute much to improve substantially the quality of spiritual, moral and cultural life of humankind unless they sub-serve the micro plans formulated at the level of the people by the people themselves. What spiritually inspired voluntary people's effort should do is to harness the potential of the people and strengthen it until it develops itself to be a mass non- violent constructive movement transcending religious, ideological and national barriers. Only at that stage can the poor and the deprived in the world and the spiritually-motivated people like us, make our voices heard and even selectively co-operate with these top-heavy, ultra-modern and elitist organisations. Otherwise we as non-governmental organisations have to continue to do only a peripheral job while we see our world falling apart. I would also like to caution you about politics. This is another dangerous trap in which all of us can easily get caught. What human society needs at this time is not power, party, and partisan politics, to which we may credit so much of human

deprivation, suffering the arms build-up and the destruction of our nature and nature itself. They are all based on not-so spiritual value-systems. What is most needed is people's participatory politics.

It is at this level that sane decisions pertaining to the well-being of individuals, families and communities can be taken in a very personal way and within their value- systems. I look at what is called the standard of living as something to do mostly with quantity. On the other hand the quality of life has mostly to do with noble human values which sustain human civilization. Quantity can be centralised and dealt with in monstrous structures. Quality, on the other hand, by its very nature has to be cultivated, protected and promoted in a decentralised manner with caring and sharing structures. We have to make intelligent choices between quality and quantity in our work, based on religious values.

You may wonder why I have not said very much about National Awakening (Deshodaya) and World Awakening (Vishvodaya). If we can succeed in expanding our activities at the levels I have talked about, then as a natural consequence of that lateral extension, it is possible to create sufficient constructive processes that would contribute to achieving these ideals without getting weighed down with unmanageable institutional and administrative arrangements. Individuals, families and communities can be easily linked with other individuals, families and communities in one's own country, or elsewhere, on the principles of respect for life, sharing sustainability and continuity to liberate mutually awakening processes.

I am not a believer in the possibility of building lasting peace on political compromises though I do not contest its limited usefulness at a time of crisis. On the other hand our contribution should be for a more lasting peace which can only come about by raising the level of spiritual consciousness of humanity. In that endeavour we have to get the participation of all people as human beings. Then we will be releasing two forces simultaneously- the Power of Righteousness (Dharma Shakti) and the Power of the People (Jana Shakti) - whose interaction and self-multiplying capacity will take care of both Development (Awakening) and Peace.

## LEARNING IN SARVODAYA

### Introduction

This essay, entitled "Learning in Sarvodaya," is about the learning processes that are taking place in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka. The literal meaning of Sarvodaya Shramadana is 'To awaken all through mutual sharing.'

The Movement was founded 26 years ago by a group of teachers and students of Nalanda College, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The idea and practice of Sarvodaya Shramadana caught on with others and it developed in three phases, becoming perhaps the largest non-governmental people's movement in the world. Today the movement is active in more than seven thousand village communities in Sri Lanka and involves over two and a half-million people. In five more years, if our goals are realized, 12,000 villages and 7 million people will be involved.

The first phase of the movement was a Study - Service programme. Its main activity during this period of approximately ten years was for students and teachers to reside in the most depressed villages in Sri Lanka and to share their physical labour with people, helping them to satisfy some of their most pressing needs, such as water for drinking and irrigation purposes. While rendering a service to village communities, these volunteers received the opportunity to learn from that experience and from the cultural wealth of the people.

The second phase of the movement was an integrated rural development programme undertaken in one hundred villages which later expanded into several thousand villages. During this phase emphasis was on programmes for the satisfaction of basic needs implemented along the principles of self-reliance, community participation and planned development action.

The third phase of the movement began almost with the dawn of its third decade. In thousands of places, participant-beneficiaries of the movement began to conceive the type of

society they could realistically build for themselves without losing their traditional, cultural roots. The experience, the knowledge and the wisdom gained during the last twenty six-years are used today by these communities to move in the direction of this new society, which is called a no-poverty, no-affluence society.

Each village community (or urban group) is its own decision-maker and implementer. They all organise their own shramadana camps and nutrition, health-care and psycho-social development programmes for their pre-school children, school children, youth, mothers, farmers and others, and organise themselves as legally incorporated societies to qualify for maximum benefits from governmental extension services. Clusters of such villages, generally ten in each cluster, establish a loose link with one another for mutual help and co-ordination.

A full-time Sarvodaya volunteer helps each cluster in its organisational, training and resource mobilization activities. There are over 240 divisional Sarvodaya centres whose leaders receive basic training in a variety of appropriate technologies necessary to their village self- development activities. 27 other district level Sarvodaya Development Education Institutes and several training centres offer higher levels of skills.

Sarvodaya National Headquarters, situated at Moratuwa (close to Colombo), co-ordinates and supports this network of services with a full-time staff and appropriate facilities. The headquarters also houses an international services facility.

If the inspiration for Sarvodaya Shramadana came from the Gandhian movements in India, its spiritual sustenance mainly derives from indigenous Buddhist thoughts, value systems and practices. The application of these precepts are more or less universal, without any ethnic or religious discrimination but with the single-purpose of the well-being of all.

Sarvodaya did not start with a preconceived theory which had only to be put into practice. On the other hand, whatever might be called theory developed from the experience gained in practice. What the Sarvodaya workers did in the past and are doing now is to face challenges as they come and respond to them. Therefore, what I am trying to do in this essay, is to describe some of the events we experienced and some of the ideas we learned. It is by

no means a complete theory of learning, because the work of Sarvodaya is not finished.

What follows is in three parts.

Firstly, I raise the question "Learning for What?" and try to answer it from our Sarvodaya experience.

Secondly, I describe how learning is conceived in Buddhist communities and how we in Sarvodaya learned from our experience.

Thirdly, I try to project future possibilities for the field of learning attained, by releasing a series of processes at individual, group and community levels with the clear objective of synthesizing individual with global goals for an awakening personality in an awakening world.

### **Learning for what?**

The 1950s, the period in which Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement was conceived and initiated, can be viewed as the hey-days of blind imitation of western values, developmental goals, technologies and institutional forms by the elites of Sri Lanka who took over the administration of the country from the colonial powers. The educational administrators of this period more or less succeeded in convincing the political elite that its main task was to conform the entire school age population of the country with the established elementary and secondary educational institutions in the capital and three other main cities in the country. Of course, until such time as this was accomplished, the existing schools which catered to the children of the privileged classes could accept their children too!

This, the free-education scheme which began in 1944 and emphasised national languages, the introduction of science education, the establishment of technical educational institutions, and so on, broadened the base of the system and helped it to cater to a larger clientele. However, the more fundamental question, "Learning for What?" was completely ignored, perhaps owing to the assumption by the elite that what was best for the world was already preached, and practiced, by the West.

Industrialization, modernisation, secularisation, economic growth, efficiency in production, employment creation, import

substitution, man-power development, social engineering, and so on and so forth, were the key slogans in which the elite classes excelled. Most common people marvelled at the wisdom of these new rulers and pace-setters, but there were a few among the rural folk who sensed some sort of lack of direction in these exercises.

The few national leaders who stood for indigenous life-styles, spiritual and moral values, simplicity, culture, right livelihood, character building, and meditation as a learning process were ridiculed as chauvinists or religious fanatics.

Under these circumstances, it was an extremely difficult and self-imposed task that we voluntarily undertook in taking education away from a class-room centered, textbook based, examination oriented context to the real life situation in the backwoods of Sri Lanka villages. At that time, non-formal education was not a term in use. Hence, we had to play safe with educational bureaucrats, parents who yearned to educate their children for white collar jobs, and other vested interests in the villages where we worked, for they did not want to disturb an established system of injustice and exploitation but wished to benefit from it. All our Study-Service projects at that time were organised during school vacations and holidays because these vested interests could not intervene easily with what students and teachers did during their free time. In spite of all the precautions we took we had our share of indifference, ridicule, abuse and punitive action at the hands of the managers of the educational establishments. However, the common people with whom we worked not only developed a respect for what Sarvodaya was doing but made it an integral part of an awakening process of their small communities.

In a Shramadana (or work sharing) camp, we set a time table of which three to five hours daily were devoted to three meetings which we called family gatherings. During these family gatherings, the teachers, students, villagers and others all sat in a circle in the open air and learned from one another. Every possible technique—singing, folk-dancing, drama, role-playing, story-telling, reading from old texts, camp-fires, community meditation was used to communicate with and learn from one another. In these family gatherings all the initial Principles and Objectives of Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement were discussed and agreed

upon. It was much later that they were incorporated by Act of Parliament as the guiding principles and rules for our work as an association.

As both a possible answer to "Learning for What?" and as an illustration of how the theoretical foundation of Sarvodaya developed, I quote the General Objectives and General Principles of the Movement which first discussed and agreed upon by consensus at family gatherings.

"General Objectives: The General Objectives of the Association shall be:

1. To provided, through Shramadana Camps and other constructive means, adequate opportunities and the appropriate mental climate for the realization of the principles, the philosophy, and the objectives of Sarvodaya by the Shramadana voluntary workers who engage themselves in village development and community welfare projects;
2. To provide opportunities to youth to acquire a correct understanding of the socio-economic and other problems of the country and to organise educational and training programmes for them to learn ways of solving these according to the Sarvodaya philosophy;
3. To organise programmes with a view to the eradication of distrust and social disintegration arising from such differences as caste, race, creed, and party politics;
4. To disseminate qualities of selfless service, self-denial, co-operation, self-discipline, and the dignity of labour among the people of the land;
5. To encourage the development, especially in youth, of healthy views on social justice, equality, love of one's motherland and international brotherhood;
6. To develop self-confidence, co-operation and unity among the urban and rural communities and to evoke their inherent strength to achieve the all-round development of their spiritual, moral, social, economic, and educational life;
7. To train and organise groups of youth who are ready to

come forward and render voluntary service in times of national distress in community development and social welfare programmes;

8. To collect and mobilize the maximum possible resources of the people, such as their time, intelligence, energy, wealth, specialised skills and technological knowledge, which they are prepared to donate of their own free will, and to utilize them scientifically in bringing about the general economic and social progress of the people;
9. To associate for the general realization of the objectives of the various institutions of the United Nations and especially to assist in the programmes of the Freedom From Hunger Campaign of the Food and Agricultural Organisation, the UNICEF, the UNESCO and the WHO, to eradicate hunger, illiteracy, and disease from our world;
10. To promote the idea of the need for, and the importance of, the establishment of an International Shramadana Corps, under the auspices of the United Nations, through its member nations.

General Principles: The members of the Association shall accept the following Ten Basic Principles, as the principles for which they shall strive:

1. To observe Truth, Non-violence and Self-denial at all times;
2. To attain progressively the goal of a simple way of living;
3. To avoid political party affiliation in order that the integrity of the Association may be preserved;
4. To assist in the national development and social welfare projects of the government;
5. To attempt to replace the present system of private ownership of wealth, competitiveness, hatred, greed, and force with a Sarvodaya Social Order based on community ownership, co-operation, love and self-denial by non-violent methods;
6. To accept the concept of Sarvodaya or Welfare of All found as the heart in the teachings of such world religious leaders

as Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed and to follow the example set by such noble leaders as Emperor Asoka, Anagarika Dharmapala, Mahatma Gandhi by utilizing our traditional principles of the four Brahma Viharas (sublime abodes), namely, Metta (loving - kindness), Karuna (Compassionate Actions), Muditha (Altruistic Joy) and Upekkha (Equanimity) and the four tenets of social conduct, namely, Dana (Sharing), Priya Vacana (Pleasant Speech), Artha Charya (Constructive Activity) and Samanathmatha (Equality in Association) and choosing the Middle Path or the Noble Eight-fold Path to achieve the ideal of Sarvodaya and to make this island of Sri Lanka, once again, a land of plenty and righteousness;

7. To accept that the means by which the Objectives of the Association are to be achieved should be honest and pure;
8. To accept and abide by the decisions of the Executive Council and the Elders' Council in matters pertaining to membership of the Association and to pledge that the only step that such member shall take is to voluntarily resign if the said Councils decide to remove such member from membership;
9. To realize that Shramadana is only the first step in the achievement of a total, non-violent revolution in all matters - social, moral political and economic - and to render services in other Sarvodaya steps and measures that establish a Sarvodaya Social System in which justice and equality shall be the salient features and in which exploitation of man by man in any form shall be entirely eliminated; and
10. To realize and work towards the idea that the maximum well-being and happiness of humanity can only be achieved when, country by country, people non-violently organise into self-reliant, rural and urban communities in which scientific and spiritual values are harmoniously combined for the welfare of all and when the world community, consisting of such nations, organises itself into a Commonwealth of independent nations in which peace, co-operation and mutual respect for the freedom of such independent nations are the salient features."

In short, we reached consensus that the objective of learning in Sarvodaya should be the Awakening of Human Personality to the fullest (*Purna Paurushodaya*), in the context of The Awakening of the Family (*Kutumbodaya*), The Awakening of the Village Community (*Gramodaya*) and the Urban Community (*Nagarodaya*), the National Community (*Deshodaya*) and the World Community (*Vishvodaya*).

We also realized that these six levels of awakening are inter-related and therefore must take place in an integrated way. We also understood that our awakening must take place simultaneously in all the dimensions of man and society, namely spiritual, moral, cultural social, political, and economic.

Based on these objectives, Sarvodaya has developed its own frame for deciding on the acceptance or rejection of theories of learning, educational practices, development strategies, and technologies.

While Sarvodaya perceives learning as a continuing process ultimately leading to self-realization, which according to Buddhism is final deliverance from the cycle of births and deaths, we do not overlook the immediate needs which must be satisfied for individuals as well as groups.

What are the basic needs of human beings and their families? What are the needs of communities? How do the learning processes in Sarvodaya relate to the satisfaction of these needs at different levels? What are the appropriate technologies, learning institutions, and methodologies that have to be developed to meet these requirements? These are some of the questions to which Sarvodaya programmes try to respond in practice.

### **Learning in Sarvodaya**

Sarvodaya perceives human learning as a process. This perspective is based upon one of the fundamental truths of Buddhism, namely *anatta* or the absence of a permanent and immutable self or soul in a human person. A process involves change and development, and learning would be rendered meaningless unless the possibilities for change and development are recognized. This process is associated with one's immediate life (*ditta-dhamma, drsta-janman*), even though one's life does not begin with birth and end with death. Connected with past lives,

with possibilities of survival in the future, human life continues to evolve to evolve through long periods of time with unpredictable fluctuations and this is called samsara or "wandering". In this wandering, each manifest life provides an opportunity for change and improvement and this opportunity is held sacred in Buddhism. "Let not a moment pass by" (*khano ve ma upaccaga*), advised the Buddha. This advice has been taken very seriously by the Sarvodaya Movement. The goal of human life is enlightenment and freedom. No learning is meaningful unless it is able to bring about that joy of freedom from the trammels of existence.

Therefore, learning is for the final liberation of the human person, and this is more easily achieved in the context of a healthy and harmonious society. Freedom or liberation, whether it is of a human or of a society, cannot be achieved amid of constraints created by the human beings themselves. According to Buddhism, greed (*lobha*) or craving (*tanha*) generated by the human beings serves as the most potent constraint, not only in his dealings with the fellow members of this society, a greedy person propels himself in the fluctuating life-process, referred to as samsara, and makes life miserable for himself as well as others. Freedom from greed or craving enables one to understand the nature of human life as a process with no immutable substance, and thereby facilitates learning as a means to improving the human conditions. The first step in the direction of achieving freedom from craving is sharing (*dana*).

From its very inception, Sarovdaya has been motivated and inspired by this Buddhist solution to the problem of human suffering (*dukkha*). Sarvodaya perceived the need for a method of learning that would inculcate the value of sharing among all human beings as a means to achieving freedom and happiness during one's present life, short and fragile as it is. Even though Sarvodaya's goal is to make this sharing universal, it recognizes that sharing begins at the grass-roots level, at the level where a human being is conceived in the mother's womb.

The Buddhist conception of human life, how it comes to be, is again the foundation of Sarvodaya practice. The famous neurosurgeon, a Nobel Laureate, John Eccles, once remarked that science cannot explain how and when consciousness appears in a human foetus. As a devout Catholic, he attributed this

phenomenon to superhuman creation. Empiricist philosophers like John Locke, whose ideas have been nurtured in a similar religious tradition, believed that human consciousness originates as a *tabula rasa* which, upon the birth of that being, comes into contact with the world thereby forming all its ideas through sensory impressions. However, the Buddhist takes a totally different view of this situation. The consciousness that appears in a being conceived in a mother's womb as a result of the proper conditions being available is not looked upon by the Buddhist as being absolutely pure. It carries with it past dispositions (*sankhara*) that links it to previous lives. Similarly, if the conditions are available, a human personality can survive physical death. Not willing to provide any guarantees as to when consciousness first appears in the foetus formed in the mother's womb, the Buddhist insists upon the sacredness of that foetus from the time of its very conception. As a result, from the very moment of conception, a mother begins to share her life with the being she carries in her person, with the father playing a constant protective role. For this reason, for every human being, during each life time, the process of learning begins at conception. Thus, the environment in which it is to mature is protected with extraordinary care. Admitting the influence of the mother's physical, emotional and social life on the child that she is bearing, every effort is made to provide her with a surrounding that would not cause her any anxiety or depression.

Recognizing that she loves her child as she loves her own life, a pregnant woman returns to her own mother's house to spend the third month after the conception in order to enjoy her own mother's love and affection. In addition to the maternal love that she receives in that situation, she is provided with special nutrition. Utmost care is taken that she does not ingest commonly accepted but non-nutritional and possibly poisonous substances. She returns to her mother's home once again during the seventh month of pregnancy, and after she has given birth to her child, she remains there for another three before returning to her husband.

Such traditional practices may appear to be very primitive in the context of a modern society which, as mentioned earlier, assumes that a human life makes its appearance for the first time in the mother's womb. However, for Buddhists who believe in

past lives and the possibility of carrying over dispositions from the past to the present existence, the need for providing a suitable surrounding (*patirupadesa*) where bad tendencies can be eliminated and good ones cultivated becomes one of urgent necessity. In encouraging such practices, the Sarvodaya is not necessarily receding into the dark ages, as has been suggested by some sociologists enamoured of modernism and lacking respect for tradition. On the contrary, realizing the enormous problems created by ill- conceived practices of modern parents that lead to physical as well as psychological deformities in children that they bring into this world, the Sarvodaya attempts to go back to a tradition that has proved its effectiveness and usefulness. These are the traditional ways (*sanathana dhamma*) respected by Sarvodaya.

Let us consider one illustrative example. The Buddhist tradition, as explained above, encourages the elimination of greed or craving in order to attain enlightenment and freedom. However, the very same tradition encourages the satisfaction of non-harmful desires on the part of the child-bearing mother. The satisfaction of her desires is attempted, not for her own sake, but for the sake of the child she is bearing. If the theory that the emotional state of the mother can influence the child that she bears is accepted, than a constant yearning on her part and the attendant dissatisfactions can influence the emotional life of the child. There is no way in which a child still in the mother's womb could be educated regarding the evils of greed and the benefits of self-restraint. The only thing that can be attempted is the avoidance of a state of yearning on the part of the mother, and thereby preventing a similar state in the child. This practice of satisfying the mother's yearnings is abandoned immediately after she gives birth to her child. A mother whose yearnings were satisfied to the maximum is now expected to exercise all the self-restraint that a normal person is expected to cultivate.

This concludes the initial process whereby a mother share her life with the child. With the child's entry into the family, the whole family comes to share with one another all of what it possesses. Sarvodaya strongly encourages such sharing as a way of eliminating greed and selfishness on the part of human beings, thereby preventing the emergence of any form of *possessive*

*individualism*, so characteristic of certain modern societies. This sharing is the basis of learning in Sarvodaya. In all its activities, Sarvodaya attempts to provide a learning experience that will lead to the formation of a society of "sharing individuals" rather than "possessive individuals".

The first three years of the life of a child is considered extremely important in the formation of his or her character and personality. During these formative years, the Sarvodaya encourages the mother to be with her child most of the time. Maternal love, which is the most sublime in the eyes of a Buddhist who does not venture into the unknown mysteries which seek the *agape*, serves as a model or a standard for any other love or compassion one can extend to the rest of the world. Nurtured in such maternal love, the child is then exposed to learning in the midst of other children. Pre-school or nursery education has, therefore, been an integral part of learning in Sarvodaya. Social ideals are here inculcated through playing together and learning together.

After moulding a child's character in the above manner and providing him with a solid foundation whereby he can function as a humane person, Sarvodaya advocates the utilization of the availability of the free and compulsory primary and secondary education levels in Sri Lanka. A determined attempt is made to minimize drop-outs. Since Sarvodaya is not in a position to offer primary or secondary education on its own, due to legal and financial constraints, the Movement devotes its energies to organizing after-school programs designed to provide learning opportunities through activities which inculcate the ideals of sharing.

Sharing presupposes action. In Sarvodaya, such action is viewed from an individual as well as a group standpoint. Individual development and group development are not conceived as two separate processes but as simultaneous ones taking place in the individual and in the community to which he belongs.

The Sarvodaya theory of learning views individual development as taking place in four ways, all of them functioning together. They are *metta* or friendliness that presupposes respect for life, *muditha* or joyous participation in the happiness of the community, *karuna* or compassionate action and *upekkha* or

considerate behaviour. As such, all individual learning should begin with the development of an attitude of respect for life. One may broaden it to include all forms of life, whether they be big or small. This is then extended to include inanimate existence: the ecology, which is part and parcel of all human as well as non-human existence.

The development of such an attitude, of course, begins with respect for one's own life. "I have my life, and so do the others." Realizing this, one begins to exude loving-kindness for himself. It is presupposed that a person who cannot and does not develop loving-kindness for himself cannot extend that loving-kindness to others. Having shown loving-kindness to himself, a person proceeds to extend it to the immediate members of his family, those near and dear to him. This psychological attitude is again extended to include others away from him. Step by step this extension takes place until even his known and unknown kith and kin are included in it. This extension goes on to envelop his enemies, those not known to him, and finally, the entire world. Thus he comes to develop loving-kindness to all living beings, great or small, and this loving-kindness is comparable to the love that a mother possesses for her only child.

This loving-kindness emanates from his respect for life. Together with it the child develops a joy in perceiving others who meet with success. He bears no ill-will towards others. Instead, he considers their success his own. He becomes a very considerate person without allowing any constraints such as greed or craving to interfere in his relations with others. Living in the midst of things that continually generate desires and hankering, as well as aversion and hatred he remains like a rock standing in the middle of the ocean unaffected by the rough waves that surround it.

The process that leads to individual development aims at one final objective, that is, the eradication of craving and the promotion of welfare of the community including himself. Learning in Sarvodaya, as stated by us, is for the purpose of eradicating this craving which is the cause of immediate unhappiness as well as birth and death in the long run. This eradication cannot be achieved all at once, and in most human beings it has to follow a gradual process, and the four states mentioned earlier have to be reached by learning and activity.

These activities are of three kinds:

1. Those that are physical,
2. Those that are verbal, and
3. Those that are mental

Learning must help the individual to control and structure his physical, verbal, and mental life. With such control and restraint, one can achieve the gradual lessening of craving, leading to better understanding and wisdom.

In Sarvodaya, learning leads to wisdom, and wisdom is necessary component in the path to freedom and happiness. Sarvodaya recognizes the "purity of wisdom" advocated by the Buddha. This purity of wisdom resides not in its absoluteness or transcendence, but in the goal to which it leads, namely, the complete cessation of craving. Craving leads to ignorance or makes us ignorant of the true nature of human life. Thus, at the very foundation of learning as well as wisdom, which are means by which we attempt to get rid of ignorance, is the cessation of craving. All mental, verbal, and bodily actions that lead to the removal of ignorance finally lessens craving and converts the knowledge thus accumulated into wisdom.

This process of transforming knowledge into wisdom has two phases. They are morality (*sila*) and concentration (*samadhi*,). *Sila* is discipline, and without discipline no learning is possible. In the case of the individual, the control he exercises over his physical, verbal, and mental behaviors emanates from *sila*. The minimum of such *sila* consists of five precepts, and all of them seem to be based upon a deep respect for all life. These five precepts are: (I) refraining from destroying life, (II) refraining from taking what is not given, (III) refraining from sexual misconduct, (IV) refraining from falsehood, and (V) refraining from all forms of intoxicants. One may develop this discipline further by adding other virtues to it. But basically they provide an excellent beginning in the control of one's physical, verbal, and mental action, thus contributing to the formation of a virtuous and righteous personality.

The *sila* or morality thus developed by avoiding injury or harm to oneself as well as others also has a positive aspect, referred to earlier, namely, the practice of loving-kindness in thought and action, both physical and verbal. The total effect of such a practice

is *samadhi* or concentration of mind. A person who is morally good has no reason to be frightened of evil that may accrue to him as a result of his actions. Instead of worrying about such things, he can concentrate his attention on things that need to be done for his own welfare or for the welfare of others. This concentration of mind is a pre-condition necessary for learning to be transformed into *panna* or wisdom.

In the case of the community, which after all, consists of individuals, there are four additional stages necessary for development. This process begins with *dana* or sharing, which leads to pleasant speech, constructive activity and finally to equality.

It has been pointed out that *dana*, or sharing, is a very wide concept which is at the basis of Sarvodaya's theory or learning. When associated with community development, it is visualised as comprehending all forms of sharing beginning with the sharing of labour and ending with the sharing of knowledge (*buddhi dana*). In between one may perceive it as consisting of the sharing of land, sharing of any other material, sharing in collective activity, sharing in matters pertaining to health, etc. The concept is so wide that there is nothing that cannot be included in it.

It is often stated that if one learns this principle of *dana* only, it would be sufficient for him to acquire knowledge that culminates in wisdom. (*Dana*) is not merely the act of sharing: it is a state of mind which one develops in the context of a community, encompassing the three-fold aspects of human behaviour: physical, verbal and psychological.

It is *dana* that gave rise to the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement three decades ago. A group of young people thought it useful to engage in a *shramadana* or the sharing of one's labour. The term *shramadana* thereafter became part of the name given to Sarvodaya. The sharing of labour involved was a process of learning leading to a realization. A certain village's inhabitants, considered to belong to a low caste, were motivated to engage in *shramadana* and realized eventually that they too were human beings like others. The sense of inferiority that had been inculcated and developed in them for successive centuries was gradually eradicated in this learning process of *shramadana*. The learning made them aware of themselves as human beings equal to

others.

This learning was made possible by all the four phases of individual as well as group development. The idea of equality was emphasised in different ways. Every one who participated in the process was considered equal to all others. In practice every strategy was introduced to emphasise this equality. For example, all food was cooked in the communal kitchen and everyone shared it. Everyone sat on the floor on mats and participated in the activities. Even in the seating arrangements there was no provision made for the encouragement of 'low' and 'high' statuses of people.

Collective decision-making was always encouraged. For this purpose, discussion was encouraged. Small groups in the community were brought together, and additional opportunities for other small groups were provided. This was done by laying down a social infrastructure, for example, by the creation of Children's Groups, Youth Groups, Mothers' Groups and Elders' Groups as well as professional interest groups like Farmers' Groups. Such groups enabled the people to share their knowledge on a basis of equality. The representatives of these groups were included in the General Group for each village.

As stated above, Sarvodaya consider learning a never-ending process. Rather than an alternative to existing knowledge Sarvodaya seeks an extension of it. In this sense, Sarvodaya looks at traditional knowledge as something already available and attempts to select what is significant and relevant in it with a view to extending the boundaries of knowledge. Traditional knowledge is not frowned upon by Sarvodaya but considered a vital product of man's past experience.

Science is also looked at from this point of view. It brings new knowledge to the world, and this knowledge widens man's experience. As in the case of traditional knowledge, however, Sarvodaya attempts to be selective even here by stressing that scientific knowledge which eventually leads to the lessening of craving in man, helping him to individual and group development.

Scientific knowledge needs to be shared. Either at the level of theory or at the level of practice, it should be possible for all to share it. Esoteric knowledge or knowledge that leads to the

division of man and his community, reversing the process of individual and group development, is not considered as true knowledge by Sarvodaya. To be useful, knowledge must contribute to the inner well-being of human beings, and without that, knowledge from whatever source is useless in the eyes of Sarvodaya.

The ultimate aim of knowledge is the gradual elimination of ignorance, leading to the cessation of craving. All the steps towards this ideal have to be achieved by non-violence.

Sarvodaya emphasises respect for life, underscoring that in every activity the realisation of respect for life, whether for great or small, is above all else.

The noble Buddha has exhorted us in the following manner.

“All tremble at punishment; all fear death. Taking oneself as an example for comparison, one should neither strike nor kill. All tremble at punishment; all fear death. he who, seeking his own happiness, inflicts pain through punishment on beings who are yearning for happiness, does not obtain happiness after death.”  
(*Dhammapada 129-131*)

### **Possibilities for the future**

Learning modalities presently functioning in Sarvodaya were not preconceived field experiments designed by professional educators, or elitist administrators, or psychologists. They were developed by trial and error by young people, with help of village elders to serve a purpose. These modalities are continually re-shaped as new challenges are faced. What remains constant is the culturally accepted ultimate objective of life- self-realization - and the eternal values- non-violence, sharing, compassion. non-vengefulness, forgiveness, service to fellow-beings and respect for all life. These must be integral to any practical process of self-realization.

Sarvodaya as a movement provides, to its utmost capacity, a spiritual, psychological, physical and social environment in which the individuals and groups of a community can become motivated to learn what they want, within limitations of the levels of personality development they have attained, the opportunities they have, and the cultural realities in which they live.

What do I mean by the provision of a spiritual environment? In any Sarvodaya activity such as Shramadana camp or a meeting of the village Sarvodaya Shramadana Society, we have developed a tradition of starting it with a few minutes of meditation.

Community meditation is a spiritual exercise in five stages. It is practiced to learn about the mind-body relationship, to develop concentration of mind, to foster loving-kindness, to build a spiritual communication with others, and to consciously release a mental force for justice, peace, and harmony. This is the way we try to build a spirituo-psychological environment. We believe that this environment influences our thoughts, words, and deeds while we too can influence the "psychosphere" the same way. It is a two way process, which cannot be separated. The reason Sarvodaya places so much emphasis on this spirituo-psychological environment is that, according to our beliefs, it is the most important factor conducive to total awakening of human personality from the very inception of human life in a mother's womb.

Once a person is introduced to this form of meditation, it is entirely his responsibility if he chooses to develop his mind along higher forms of meditation such as Vipassana or Insight Meditation. However, we believe that the first learning for which one should devote time and effort is to learn about oneself and then about one's relationship to the rest of the universe. In our old educational system, this was amply provided for.

What use is there of learning about everything else in the universe without learning about one's mind-body combination and the aggregates of the mind such as sensations, perceptions, volitional activities, and consciousness, and the four great elements of form such as hardness, fluidity, heat, and motion? Meditation was the traditional technique used to initiate the student into this vast field of self-knowledge, which, unfortunately, was totally left out of the modern educational systems.

If the learning environment, as it prevails today in our societies, is dominated by amoral and immoral influences like permissiveness, consumerism, free play of market forces, debased cultural patterns, etc., no amount of schooling or sheltered family life can prevent the assimilation by the adolescent or the young

adult of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in warped and degenerate form. The negative, dehumanizing characteristics of society as evidenced in child labour, sexual abuses of children, homosexuality, drug addiction, etc., are strengthened by powerful lobbies that even seek to legalise such practices. Hence, the content of learning must be such that it liberates and humanises the individual in the direction of an ideal.

What we mean by a social and physical environment includes the broad spectrum of all the activities, institutions, social groups, and networks the Sarvodaya Movement has progressively developed over years, based on the above concepts. I do not propose to prolong this essay by trying to describe them.

In such a total environment, the community itself perceives its basic and secondary needs. Its members recognize their own human, physical, and technological resources. They are a part of a universal movement, and therefore, they are quick to learn whatever they think will benefit their self-awakening as individuals and groups. Some village communities are linked up with partner communities, school groups, or other co-operating organisations in the industrialized world who share the Sarvodaya objectives. In other words, given the necessary conditions and acceptance, they are quite ready to be active participants in a global process of learning and sharing.

In conclusion I would like to raise a question myself which sometimes others ask me: How far can Sarvodaya and similar movements in the world go in the context of the present world situation where learning is principally an imposition of a dominant world view by political and economic interests that control humanity, its resources, and technologies?

My answer is that to the extent small, decentralised communities around the world can be educated to reject entirely the modern materialistic world view and its development paradigms and decide to build a no-poverty no-affluence society based on their own insights and innovative intelligence, thus far we can go. And there is no need to go further, because the others would be forced to make an about turn to meet these forgotten cultures.

In the Buddhist tradition, the goal of education is the goal of

Sarvodaya - the awakening of all. The education of the individual can take place only in a social context of a shared development, responsibility, and respect directed to a cessation of possessive craving. Any other is likely to be mere information at best, a destructive inhumanity at worst. If education is not defined in value terms of sharing and wisdom, it will be just another good to the seductive "getting and spending" that characterizes so much of contemporary life. If it does not advance the human community, it is another turn of the wheel of repetitive despair.

But having said all this let me caution you again that this theory too must flow from and be continually- validated by human experience.

As the Kalama Sutta relates that Lord Buddha said,

"Come Kalamas. do not go upon report; do not go upon tradition, do not go upon hearsay; do not go upon correspondence with scripture; do not go upon cogitation; do not go upon logic; do not go upon specious reasoning; do not go upon approval of thought over nation; do not go upon a person's seeming ability; do not go upon the thought: "The ascetic is our teacher". Kalamas when you yourself know: "The sethings are good; these things are not blameable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit, happiness, enter on and abide in them."

## VILLAGE STUDIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES

I am not an academic, at the outset I must caution you, because if you expect an academic contribution from me, you would be greatly disappointed. I am a practical man who has experienced the Sarvodaya Process for nearly 25 years. We have been attempting to work with people and make them help themselves. In this process released in the village of Sri Lanka we have encountered varying problems. I am speaking about these problems and in a way my intention is to speak my thoughts aloud. Forgive me, if I am blunt, lacking in academic excellence, because these are never my trade-marks.

Scholars have come to us in the past and also in the present to conduct studies in our villages. I have not kept a register of such scholars from here and abroad. But from a very modest account, I might say, we had at least 1000 scholars coming to do village studies in one form or the other about our Movement in the past. The first question I have asked them is. "What practical use is your study to our villagers, our people?"

Believe me, that when I asked this question then and even now, most scholars look at me as if I am asking something that a decent person should not ask a scholar. After fidgeting embarrassingly for sometime they would say "Well, well it is for academic purposes, you know. We want to find exactly why it is so." I did not exactly understand what they said then, nor do I understand what some of them say even now. I believe they want to discover some great thing perhaps a theory or a principle that explains all our work we do with people in the village. But out of courtesy I have just helped them to go to our villages and do their studies.

But I am sorry to say when I read their research reports, I still cannot understand what they wanted to do for the village or villagers where they conducted their research. It is because of this reason that I am a little sceptical of scholars and research too.

I have always believed one thing. When a study is made about our villages the result of that study should be made available to the village. This is a norm for us - the Sarvodaya workers. When we collect something from the village as it belongs to the village the foremost benefit of that should undoubtedly be received by the villagers. When you collect information from the village, write a book and publish it elsewhere, no one in the village can find out what exactly is there in the book written by you. if this is what you call an "academic exercise" then seriously I disagree with it. You are here exploiting the people in the name of an academic exercise. Even as a scholar you have no basic right to do so. It is strange how some scholars who speak about economic and social exploitation, actually exploit people by this "academic exercise" which they do not call by that name but which is one of the most inhuman exploitations ever undertaken.

I also believe that when you write your excellent article or the book and publish it only in a language the people do not understand, you are again doing a wrong thing. Is there no way for you to make at least the major part of your findings available in the language that the people among whom you did your Research understand? I understand your desire to publish it in a Journal that your academic peers value and read. I am not worried about your peers and the academic excellence or competence of your work. But what practical impact does it have for the poor people in the village? Have they access to your distinctive Journal published for the sake of a few elite men and women in the country also in a language foreign to the village?

I do not know what you would call it, but to me if your findings are not bringing any worthwhile practical result to the village, I would call such a study a "sterile one". Village studies are for the purpose of translating the findings in the Research into action. I have asked various scholars when they begin their studies in our villages this simple question. "How would you translate your findings into action once you finish your Research work." Believe me, the majority have looked at me as if I have asked something in bad taste. Some have replied that they would make the Report available to the Government or International Organisations to implement: the others, except a few, offered various excuses.

Here I am reminded of a folktale. A woman once desired a child. The Goddess who was instrumental in getting a boon to the woman to get a child did happen to ask: "How would you expect this child to grow up and then select a useful occupation?" The woman replied by saying it is left to the child and if the child wants, he or she can choose anything. "A mother who has no idea what she wants her child to do in the future deserves no child" the Goddess has replied. Of course no one can before-hand plan what occupation a child would pursue in the future. What the Goddess actually wanted was to make the mother conscious of the upbringing of the child in a manner positively helpful to society. As she was not conscious of this primary ethical duty, the Goddess decided that she was not fit to become a mother.

In the same vein, I would say that if you have no idea as to how you would make your Research findings available to the people among whom you pursued the Research then certainly our entire exercise is of no significance to us. Some scholars have told me "We do it just to satisfy our scientific curiosity and nothing more". It is so, I am of opinion that such scholars are indeed inhuman.

Here you are engaged in an exercise in which your "laboratory" objects are human beings. You observe them, obtain data from them, with no feeling about them. You are impelled by your curiosity and nothing else. There is no justification for this kind of village study under any circumstances. However much you may have gained distinctions in your academic field, for me, you are a person with no system of values, you have no sympathy or feeling for your fellow beings.

"It may be that after we discover something in the field, later on someone may come and translate it to action." This belated hope of the arrival of Prince Charming one day is again a myth. You disguise your callous disregard for the people under a sometimes socially accepted utterance of this type. You shrug your shoulders in your inimitable academic style and often say "Of course we did the research. But that part of implementing it, is not our business." I am really angry at remarks like this. When you do a village study, when you are involved in development, it is in a way a committed type of work. You are committed both to your discipline and perhaps more to the village people. It is this

commitment that distinguishes such studies from other types of academic exercises.

Some scholars come time and expect to do village studies without even an understanding of exactly what we are doing at the grass-root level. The greatest lesson that I have learned in development is briefly this. In order to develop the village, you must first learn about the village from the people in the village. To do this you must work and live with them, sharing the complex pattern of their every day life. This experience - sharing de-educates you from all what you have imbibed elsewhere and re-educates you in relation to the village. If you are not ready for this and not in a proper frame of mind to do it, you might as well forget village studies.

Secondly you must be able to understand the people. The language of the people should be understandable to you. Of course here I do not mean only the particular languages or dialects they speak. When you meet a man or woman and you do a favour for him, the man or the woman who does not know your language, smiles in a certain way. The warmth and the style of the smile is quite clear to you. He or she is profusely thanking you for what you have done for him or her. You and he or she are "talking" in the same language. If we develop this feeling further it would not be possible to imagine a situation before hand in which you and the villagers feel a strange warmth to one another, intuitively realising or sensing, sympathising, affecting one another. "You have devised a "cultural antenna" that enable you to feel and understand the villagers. You could come to this level only when you have lived with them, worked with them and developed a great sympathy (a commitment) for them.

You scholars often say that you intend to test your "theories" on the people in the village. In such cases, I often find social scientists being interested only in the "Theories" but not in the People. My experience in development work have taught me that all theories are formulated by the People and for the People. According to that belief your grand theory must be of practical relevance to the village. When you test a theory on the people, taking the people as a set of guinea pigs, without any human feeling for them, then theory is devoid of any value for me or for the village. You may test your theory in the village but in your

commitment to search you should also have a parallel commitment to humanity. Love and respect for human beings should be a guiding principle in your village studies. Without such a love or affection and respect, your development research would lose its import to the village.

I do not know how you would look at theory which some people borrow from outside, becoming receptive to them quite quickly and attempt to fuse them with the village situation without realising its practical relevance to the problems at hand in the village. Quite a number of scholars have asked me whether through our development work we have been able to break down the class-structure of the village. How far have you been successful in changing the asset structure? The questions are undoubtedly wedded to the theory with which the scholars have identified themselves.

I observe in questions of this type the sheer inability to understand development from the point of view of people. Actually these scholars are looking at the village and the process of development from the wrong end of the telescope. They do not realize that even the terminology used by them is something foreign to the village. What does the concept of class mean to the villagers? In order to understand that one has to experience the village life. What is an asset-structure to the villagers? Without understanding these concepts from the point of view of the people it is inconceivable how one could find out answers pertaining to such concepts in the village.

A scholar known to me once worked in the village on a Research project. He observed our Shramadana Camps or Work Camps organised by us with the purpose of expending our time, energy and thought not only for the benefit of one but for the entire community. For our scholars who had no roots in our culture and village experience, Shramadana is nothing but forced labour a type of voluntary service forcibly extracted by feudal lords in the past by deceiving the people in most cases by means of religious motivation.

In the rich tradition of village culture there is the concept of the transference of merit when you do or engage yourself in a positive act; you could transfer the happiness you have gained in the performance of the act also to others who may not have been

direct beneficiaries of the act or who were not associated with you in the performance of the act. The concept of transference of merit is also a psychological device that strengthened group-cohesiveness. It also had a corollary, the accumulation of surplus merit. In the village during your leisure time, you translate your leisure time to surplus merit by engaging yourself in community activities. You "donate" your labour to the construction of a religious edifice, a water tank or an irrigation channel. In addition to the practical benefit you render to the community from such acts, there was also the belief in accumulating merit. The merit thus accumulated manifested itself in the form of a physical structure serving the community. In a way it motivated you to engage in positive activities beneficial to the community.

Shramadana is a process of accumulating merit by contributing your thoughts, energy and time to a community work. As it is a process of accumulating merit there was no compulsion about it. You engaged in the work which you thought would benefit you as well as others in the community. At the same time you believed that joining in the work brings you merit. You could then transfer this merit to others. Because of the belief in merit, you were motivated to engage in the act and because of the transference of merit, group-cohesion was emphasised and effected. When one understands these aspects, the complex concept of Shramadana became clear to us. It is not a strategy devised to exploit others, although it is possible to utilise it in this manner if some unscrupulous elements desire it so.

This understanding is absolutely necessary for a development research in the village. I am sometimes surprised at the very short period of preparation that a scholar devotes for gathering information on village life before he actually embarks on his research. He asks questions of the above-type because he has neither understood the village nor the process of development released there. These development experiences are inextricably bound by their roots to the village tradition and culture. The tradition and culture has to be understood before such questions are posed.

When we moved to Kanatholuwa in 1958, at the Nalanda College where I was a Science Teacher at the time, the Social Service League which was instrumental in the initiation of the

first Shramadana, that later laid the basis for the emergence of the Sarvodaya Movement, took nearly a period of six months for the preparation involved in going to the village. Although most of us who participated at the initial work camp came from the village, a village inhabited by a 'Backward Community' was something which none of us had experienced. We consulted people with specialised knowledge, invited the R.D. Officers associated with the Backward Communities Development Project to come and lecture to us and exploited possible techniques and avenues to gain an understanding of our selected "village." When I consider this intensive preparatory period and the work done, I am really astonished how some scholars hope to go to a village and without such intensive preparation attempt to start research work there.

Development theory, as Sarvodaya experience has taught me, has to come from the village itself. When we worked in the village where the so-called Backward Communities lived, beginning from Kanatholuwa already mentioned, the first lesson we realized in Development is that we have to learn the method of Development as it is found among the people first and then devise ways and means of improving it, if we do so desire it. In a way I feel that was a stroke of fortune that led us to the villages inhabited by "Backward Communities". Here we met men and women economically underprivileged and socially regarded as almost "untouchables". It was from programmes with the "most depressed" ("unto this last" people - the Antyodaya people) communities, who lived very much below the poverty line, we were able to experience how to set the process of Development in motion almost from scratch. They were illiterate, for the most part unhealthy and without any skills or employment. Working with them was indeed a village research for us. It was useless to ask them questions because they could not find answers nor could they understand the questions. Just imagine asking "What is your job" from a man who has never possessed any visible form of employment that he could call a 'Job'. We learned that our best research is to experience life with them and let them ask questions from us if they can. It is in this process we realized the futility of attempting to theorise from a distance. I do not here mean the grand theorist who spins his theory from a comfortable armchair at home. A theorist could transport the arm chair to the village where the people do not even possess chairs, or even know about

them, sit on it and theorize.

This type of theorising cannot be associated with research, in the village, particularly in the area of development. A researcher, as far as we have realised from our experiences in Sarvodaya, has also to be associated with the process of development. I cannot indeed conceive of two separate personalities, one a researcher and one a development worker. In the village they often say "he who carries the torch should also carry the mamoty." You light your own way and cut your own path. Of course, you scholars would argue out and say that these two ought to be separated. They should come from two different disciplines. But to us in the villages unless these disciplines are not bundled together, it serves no purpose. In the development process, the development worker while getting immersed in development, comes to occupy the vantage point of a researcher.

The Researcher prepares the path, the development worker makes the arduous journey: when they are combined as one, the Research could always translate into action what he finds out from research through the Development Worker in him.

Sometimes I have had the unique experience of having an International scholar attempting a village study with the purpose of advising his organisation as to how it could become a party in solving village problems and thus accelerating Development. In such a Research the entire decision-making process is centered in the above scholar and his organisation. They are the people who spend the money and naturally it is they who are entrusted with the important task of decision-making. In contexts such as this I have often wondered why the scholars cannot devise ways and means of enabling the people to participate in their Research. I am aware of the fact that the village people being village rustics like myself are not used to the scientific tools and complex methodology that is the prerogative of scholars. But the development programme is for them intended to better their standard of life, and it so why not provide them with opportunities to participate in decision-making at the Research level?

What right has the particular scholar to decide as to what should be done in the village, decide the line of priorities and how the activities should be organised? Is he aware of the complex process that his development action suggested by his Research

would stimulate? What sort of strategies were employed by him to ensure the participation of the people in all stages of his Research Programme including the stage of implementation?

In one of the villages I worked a man fell ill. A physician was summoned and after examination, a prescription was made by the physician. When the physician thereafter wanted to go away, the father of the sick man said "Sir, it is not our custom for the physician to prescribe the medicine and go away. We do not know as to what sort of complications would arise from your treatment. So be with the patient and our family until the illness is cured".

The researcher, unlike the above mentioned physician, had a bad habit. He often vanishes after the Report (i.e. after the prescription is made). But I believe that he should be there when the findings are put into action. What better place is there for him to be than the village when his findings are translated into a developmental process? His findings are now related to actual life. He can observe how such findings operate in complex practical situations. It is, I believe, downright unethical for him not to observe and experience the practical effects of his own findings by restricting his research interests only to do research and not to the implementation of the findings.

You scientists have devised various and ingenious research techniques which you name as "Operational Research, Research to Monitor and Evaluate or Measure Development" and such other sophisticated strategies, tools or devices. But do you actually think that you could evaluate or measure development in the same manner you measure the fall and rise of a tide?

I beg to differ. My experiences teach me that even here the last person or instrument used to measure such development work are not you Research Workers or Development Workers, but the villagers themselves. There is a Jataka story where a crow, monkey and an elephant wanted to find out each other's age in order to ascertain who is the oldest among them. The concept of years (as a means of measurement) was unknown to them. The elephant said that when he was young he rested under the particular shade of a banyon tree. The monkey said that when he was young he ate the tender leaves of the same banyon tree while seated on the ground.

The crow said that he did once fly to another banyon tree and having eaten its seeds, came to the place where the present banyon tree is. One of the seeds then found in his dung sprouted and from this the present banyon tree was born.

The measurements of development needs tools fashioned or devised by the people. The economists, sociologists, historians etc., have all miserably failed to measure development. Some have tragically confused development with economic growth, per capita income, G.N.P., P.Q.L.I. and such other various devices have been employed by you all to measure it. But if development is for the people, aren't the people the best suited to measure it and also to devise instruments to do so? In the village it is the people who feel the "Impact" primarily as it is intended for them. Sarvodaya's aim was to inspire the village people to discover their own scale of measurement and apply it by themselves.

My experience in village work is that Development, if it is to take place, has to be first understood by the people. In our villages our effort is directed always to find out whether they understand the present situation in which they are placed. In order to make them understand this situation we examine how they understood it in the past. This is where tradition becomes important to us. When they understand the present condition we endeavour to make them find out for themselves as to why it is so: The people should be motivated to ask simple questions from themselves and find out simple answers.

Next comes the question: Is there a practical way out of it? It is here that outside experiences count most. Perhaps the contact with the outside world would compel a villager to have on his development model, an industrial town in the western world.

Sarvodaya has a model for him in the villages where the basic needs of every one are satisfied. In this society there is the personality awakening resulting from the development of the four qualities of Loving Kindness, Compassionate Action, Altruistic Joy and Equanimity. The development of qualities of Sharing, Pleasant Words, Purposeful Activity and Equality result in the fashioning of the village community. The Sarvodaya process of development is intended to bring about this revolutionary transformation of man and community.

Research is valuable to me to the extent that we could utilize research to usher in development following the grammar of development in the village. If this cannot be done such Research is not of value to me. As far as I have experienced in development work particularly in our villages there cannot exist two unconnected phases: Development and Research. They are indeed two sides of the same coin and cannot be separated from each other. The villagers, I believe, should participate in Research in all its different phases and also in implementing its findings. It is the extent to which they participate in such development Research, the Research itself becomes relevant, practical and meaningful both ethically and otherwise!

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*(Excerpted from a "paper" presented at the Asian Regional Seminar on "Village Studies for Development Purposes" organised by the Sri Lanka Marga Institute, Colombo).*

## PEOPLE'S DECLARATION FOR NATIONAL PEACE AND HARMONY

### Presentation

We, the Citizens of Sri Lanka, belonging to diverse races, professing different creeds and speaking different languages, representing people from all districts of Sri Lanka engaged in professions and services of a non-political nature such as, Justice, Education, Agriculture, Labour, Medicine, Science, Technical, Legal, Arts, Letters, Administration, Communication, Business, Banking, Teaching, Clerical, Corporation and Public Security, having assembled at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, on Saturday and Sunday of the tenth and eleventh phases of the waning moon of the month of Binara in the year 2527 of the Buddhist Era, or, 1st and 2nd of October 1983 A.D., responding to the kind invitation extended by the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya and with the blessings of the Maha Sangha, headed by the most Venerable Maha Nayake Theras, as well as the very Reverend Clergy of Hindu, Christian and Islamic Religious Orders and being devoid of all partialities, with the avowed aim of dispelling the current mutual distrust, disunity, violence and indecision, and with the sole objective of achieving Unity, Harmony, Peace, Co-existence and Prosperity of the Sri Lanka people, and of re-establishing our country as true, non-violent, united and a nationally integrated society, based on the Law of Righteousness and People's Power, to be again worthy of the honour of being called the Land of Plenty and of Righteousness and having met peacefully, deliberated peacefully, and having arrived at a consensus, do most respectfully present this "People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony" to All Religious Leaders headed by the Maha Sangha, the General Public of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, their Community Leaders, His Excellency the President and the Honourable the Prime Minister, the Members of Parliament, the Leaders, and Followers of all Political Parties, and

solicit their fullest co-operation and participation in effecting this Declaration.

## **Prologue**

In 1948 when Sri Lanka was on the verge of freeing herself of foreign domination and influence of over four and a half centuries, faint signs of a Sinhala - Tamil distrust manifested themselves disrupting the amity that prevailed until then, penetrating into many aspects of the Community Life of the island in the form of racially divisive activities- political and otherwise - leading to national disharmony and ultimately to the Tragedy of the last week of July 1983, giving violent shocks to the major portion of the decent, law-abiding Sri Lanka population, and violating both the State Law and the Law of Righteousness, destroying social peace, and in particular, the spirit of co-existence that prevailed then, though to a limited degree, between the Sinhala and Tamil communities, and having realised that it is the duty of every citizen to study in depth and analyse the symptoms of common degeneration in our society that surfaced through this tragedy, and to root out its causes and whereas this tragedy has discredited and dishonoured Sri Lanka in the eyes of the world, and as the very thought of resultant repercussions of such incidents, if repeated, is frightening, and whereas it is the duty of every responsible citizen to ensure that no such unfortunate situation would ever recur in future in our land and to resolve this complex problem, justly and non-violently and with a genuine conviction, avoiding being extremist, in order to prevent it being worse confounded, and hence, the re-establishment of Peace being the vital challenge of the moment facing the Sri Lankan Community, and it being our firm conviction and fervent hope that it is through such non-violent, just and peaceful means that a lasting solution may be found, and that the territorial integrity and the unitary status of the State, together with the fortune that posterity may be able to live in peace and in a spirit of co-existence could be ensured.

We, representing the general public of Sri Lanka, have resolved to proclaim this "People's Declaration for Peace and Harmony" for the guidance and inspiration of our own selves - the Sri Lankans of the present, as well as those of the future.

## Principles

Accepting the Buddha's noble pronouncement "Hatred does not cease by hatred: only by non-hatred does hatred cease" and by basing ourselves on the principles that only non-violence should mark the fate of human progress that all attempts at the solution of problems in modern society should be free from evil in thought and deed, treat the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka comprising 25,332 sq. miles of land surrounded by the Indian Ocean, the identity of the Sri Lankan Community, the Unitary Status of the Sri Lankan State and, in particular, the laws defining the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, as well as the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be safeguarded at all costs and paying due concern only on the "wrong deeds" but not on the "wrong doers" of the past or present, and fully comprehending the difficulty of arriving at solutions by merely shifting the past or present responsibility for the current divisive situation on any single person or a single group alone, and the necessity that in a distress or a crisis that man comes to face individually or collectively, its causal factors should be searched for, identified and analysed in depth, and realising the importance of removing of such causal factors, and of arriving at solutions and means thereof, we have inscribed the following:

## Aims

While proclaiming that the aim that motivated us to participate at this Conference and to adopt this Declaration was not to offer detailed solutions, or in particular, to propose political solutions to all problems between the Sinhala, Tamil and other communities, which have made way for the crisis facing our contemporary society, but, to create a spiritual, mental, social, and intellectual environment on a national scale needed for the task of finding solutions through friendly discussion and our active participation through the recommendations of twelve intellectual panels which would study in depth the subjects related to national problems, we re-emphasise that our aim in searching for these solutions is not to get involved in argument and debate, heading to further complications, but, to create a suitable spiritual mental, social and intellectual environment for arriving at possible solutions in a

friendly dialogue based on the principles of Truth and Non-violence.

### **Symptoms of General Degeneration in our society**

While we accept the fact that, the Stability, Peace and Progress of a Society rest on the degree of understanding, respect and adherence on the part of its members, to its Value System upon which the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Social, Economic and Political Sectors of that society are based, and the honour paid and the adherence attached to it by the members and that our Society showed a gradual degeneration in all these sectors during the post World-War II era, and that, the resulting decadence reached its climax in July erupting into criminal incidents with possible political and/or communal overtones of a very serious nature and having realised that these incidents have shattered the very foundation of our social fabric, revealing:

- Firstly* - the existence of a number of groupings in our Society, numerically very small, but yet very powerful, who neither pay any heed to, nor observe, what we as cultured people have commonly upheld for thousands of years, as Good and Evil, Moral and Immoral, Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust, Fair and Foul, Human and Inhuman and that,
- Secondly* - their solution to Political, Economic, Social or any other problem, is beyond the realms of the accepted Law of the Land, being conceived only through violence and thuggery, and that,
- Thirdly* - they pay not even the scantest respect to life - human or other - and that,
- Fourthly* - they derive immense mental satisfaction (consciously or unconsciously) by destroying private and public property, and that,
- Fifthly* - in their midst, even religious leaders, the custodians of Value Systems in our Society have become ineffective, and that,
- Sixthly* - some politicians and others who wielding more of wealth, power and position, guided by narrow, political and economic gains, shield, and protect

these lawless elements, ignoring the damage and destruction they cause to established norms, human lives and the Nation as a whole, and that,

- Seventhly* - the efficiency and power of the Police to safeguard Law and Order in such a situation have been weakened and that,
- Eighthly* - even the Law Courts and Prisons, administering and enforcing Law have become unsafe, and that,
- Ninthly* - the discipline and morale of the Police and the Armed Forces to make their presence felt in the event of a national calamity, whatever the cause may be, have deteriorated, and that,
- Tenthly* - respectful and law abiding citizens have feelings of doubt and fear to stand up and generate and provide People's Power essential for the protection of the Value System and the enforcement of Law and Order, in the event of these lawless elements taking over disrespecting Value Systems and violating the State Law, and that,
- Eleventhly*- the Political Leaders - the strongest section in Modern Society - have failed to provide and undivided, united leadership to the people even during a serious national calamity, and that,
- Twelfthly* - as a result of all these, even foreign powers have begun to show undue concern in our internal problems causing a threat to National Sovereignty, we have come to be aware that an understanding of these symptoms of common degeneration evident in all communities living in our country, be they Sinhala, Tamil, Moor, Malay, Burgher or any other, is of utmost importance at this moment of crisis.

## **Causes of Degeneration**

### **1. Destruction of the Value System**

We believe that, foremost among the factors causing this degeneration is the destruction of the Value System, which for

centuries past sustained the main civilizing force of Society, and that this Value System was founded on the ancient Hindu - Buddhist Code of Ethics epitomising Respect for Life - in particular Human Life - and that these ethics were stabilised in our Society during the heyday of our civilization, especially when Buddhism exerted its maximum influence, crystallising the, mselves into the Observance of the Five Precepts, viz., the Abstinence from Killing, Stealing, Sexual misconduct, Lieing and Consumption of Intoxicants, and that intrinsically, Christinanity and Islam, which later permeated our Society, do not stand in contradiction to the said Value System and that, the study of Pali and Sanskrit, the classical languages of India also enriched these values which in turn nurtured all social, economic and political corporations Man had established with himself and Nature, and that, with the advent of the Western Imperialists, this Spiritual Culture was weakened and the self-sufficient Agricultural Economy collapsed giving way to a Commercial Culture, with the encroachment of which our spiritual values were gradually forced aside, and a Society, totally biased towards Commercial Values was installed, and that, with the pride of place being given to the English Language, in order to facilitate these Commercial motives the source languages which spiritually nurtured the majority of the Sinhala - Tamil community gradually began to dry up, and that community life too, assuming the nature of an empty reservoir of which all fountain sources were exhausted, was exposed consequently to an infusion of materialistic ideas and habits, of the foreigners, which changed the life style of the local population so that the general Sinhala - Tamil public of the post-independence era who thought and worked in the local languages became psychologically distanced from one another, though a minority of Sinhalas and Tamils nurtured in the western values and life-styles (referred to) became closely knit together through the medium of the English language though at the same time being further alienated from the afore - mentioned common Sinhala and Tamil community and that, as a result, the life-style which was founded on the observance of the Five precepts, of which Respect for Human Life was the cornerstone, was transformed further with an intolerable bias towards the aspirations of a privileged, West - oriented few, who enjoyed wealth, position and power.

## **2. Discrepancy in the Educational System**

While accepting that, the relative stability of a value system is dependent on the quality of education that a people receives from generation to generation, and that it was our traditional educational system that gave birth to and nurtured our spiritual and moral values that guided our forefathers, in the pursuit of their economic, political, cultural and social activities and that, since our society began to lean towards a commercial culture, all aspects of education, viz., the scope, the methods, the texts used, parent - teacher-pupil relationship, the psychological and physical environment in which Education was imparted, the relationship between the Educational Institutes and Society, the degree of integration of pupils of different racial and religious communities as a Cohesive Group of Citizens belonging to One Nation, all these assumed the characteristics of a competitive commercial human society, and that, the close contact between Spiritual Leadership and Education, was weakened with the decline and sometimes the total destruction of the religious institutions which were centres of Education, and the waning of the influence of monks who supplied their leadership, we aver that the Discrepancy in our Educational System was a main contributory factor that led to the general National Degeneration and the mutual alienation between the Sinhala and Tamil Communities.

## **3. Loss of the Sense of Fear and Shame attached to the violation of Law and Social Norms**

We declare our acceptance of the fact that in the past as a result of the Value-based Educational System which was aimed at the fullest development of human personality, members of families, villages, cities, and the nations as a whole possessed a sense of fear and shame of committing illegal and immoral acts and that sentiment of fear arising owing to the possibility of punishment for violation of State Law, and of shame, arising out of inevitable ostracism for the breach of Social Norms, wielded tremendous power as deterrent social forces: but that, during the last few decades, specially since regaining Independence, this healthy social atmosphere met with considerable reversals and the people commonly developed a feeling that, the possession of wealth, power and position, could save one from the consequence of the violation of State Law, and that by the use of intimidation, one

may still live high yet violating Social Norms, though being secretly despised by Society. This evasion of social responsibility at the highest level paved the way for the emergence of anti-social and shameless elements in our Society.

#### **4. Weakening of Community Leadership**

We accept the fact that, by the time we regained our Independence, there prevailed through the influence of Western Imperial force a situation whereby State Law and Legal Power overpowered People's Law and Power of Righteousness and hence, as local Political Parties and Political Leadership replaced Western Rule, these Parties and their Leaders emerged to provide State, National and Religious Leadership, in place of the Value Based Leadership provided earlier by the Maha Sangha, and that because the majority Sinhala Community and the largest minority - the Tamil Community - as well as the Christian and Islamic Communities, all, degenerated in the stranglehold of divisive strife and disintegration and that the number of Community Leaders capable of providing leadership to the people from village level upto national level based on People's Power and the Power of Righteousness, gradually dwindled and almost disappeared during the more recent years.

#### **5. Interference with State Services by External Forces**

We accept the fact that, even in the presence of a weakened Law of Righteousness, Social Discipline and Social Peace will be protected at least to an extent, if the State Law is impartial but that partisan political forces and the irresponsible acts of some leaders committed openly, discredited the honour and respect due to Public Institutions such as Public Service, Police and the Army which are maintained by Public Funds for Public Safety and that hence the strength that these institutions possessed as instruments for the safety of the General Public was considerably weakened, which alone caused the decline of discipline and moral courage of those who serve in them. This in turn ushered our Society during that Dark Week, into an Interregnum.

#### **6. Creation of a Wrong Life Style**

We accept the fact that, our indigenous Life Style which encouraged and maintained a balance between both Spiritual and Material achievements degenerated gradually to lean more

towards Wants than Needs and that the creation of an ostentatious, artificial Life Style with communication mass media in the hands of the "Haves" having the way and turning the bulk of the people who form the "Have-nots" like moths to a flame during the past few years, to satisfy either their inner psychological desires or conceptual needs.

Even so, the denial of an opportunity for this by the competitive economic system led a majority of them psychologically to dissatisfaction and despair.

Hence, these disgruntled groups, who failed to realise their expectations, and in particular, some groups who were not disciplined by one or more of State Law, a wholesome education and in particular, by Value System, made use of political or communal conflicts caused by small groups, and reacted adversely committing anti-social acts to compensate for their pent-up dissatisfaction.

### **Removal of Causes of Degeneration**

While we accept the fact that mere political solutions alone are inadequate to re-establish National Peace and Harmony, and that even initial steps towards a political solution may be taken and a preliminary attempt at arresting the deterioration of the present problems may be made by first removing the factors that caused the common degeneration of our society, on the acceptance that, as responsible citizens we should

- Firstly* - re-establish our Value System,
- Secondly* - reform the present educational system fully,
- Thirdly* - regenerate social respect for moral and ethical principles,
- Fourthly* - create a suitable climate in the country for the State Law to be effective justly and impartially devoid of interferences,
- Fifthly* - promote a sense of stability, discipline and peace in all sectors of society inclusive of political leaders and community leaders both spiritual and lay,
- Sixthly* - grant the necessary freedom to the members of the Public Service and the Defence Services in order

that they may be effective in the discharge of their duties unhindered and in keeping with the Law of Righteousness and the State Law,

- Seventhly* - re-establish a suitable economic life-style, simple, plain and sustainable and promoting, in particular the psychological well-being of the younger generation, and without accepting the western modes blindly and with open arms,
- Eighthly* - create without any further delay an alternative political system in keeping with our values and needs, in place of the party based system which is a western product, and is one of the primary causes of the degeneration of and the many ills evident in present day society and for this cause we pledge ourselves to contribute constructively.

### **Way of Removing the Causes of Degeneration**

It is a well known fact that whatever the afore mentioned causes may be, the responsibility for the incidents that took place has been thrust upon the Sinhala Buddhist public and their spiritual leadership, the Venerable Maha Sangha, by the world's media, and whatever the truth of this pronouncement may be, we are of the opinion that the onus of responsibility for redeeming present society from its state of degeneration rests mainly with the Sinhala Buddhists. We accept, therefore, that

- Firstly* - steps should be taken in order to give a leadership to the Buddhist public to re-fashion their social economic and political life on the spiritual, moral and cultural values as traditionally laid down, under the leadership of the Maha Sangha,
- Secondly* - a Buddhist - Hindu Brotherhood Promotion Programme should be launched on the initiative of the Sinhala Buddhist Community owing to the sole reason that it is the Tamil Hindu population that has won world sympathy as the victims of various crimes,
- Thirdly* - leaders of all religions - as all religions are intrinsically messages of peace and brotherhood -

should unite and exert themselves in the forefront in an attempt at inculcating a sense of respect to the oral laws,

- Fourthly* - the search for subject matter regarding difficulties, obstacles faced, rights and privileges enjoyed by a community has to be pursued and reports arising out of it compiled in such manner as not to widen the existing rifts or to fan further the flames of communalism but to arrive at a settlement to the existing problems on the basis of truth.
- Fifthly* - the Plantation Communities of Indian Origin possessing Sri Lankan Citizenship should be integrated with the local village communities, and subsequently with the total Sri Lankan Community as an attempt to harmonise further our relations with our neighbour - India.
- Sixthly* - special attention has to be focussed on Tamil and other communities living in majority Sinhala areas, in order to accept them, and protect them in brotherhood, respecting and assisting to nurture their language and culture,
- Seventhly* - special attention has to be focussed on Sinhala and other communities living in majority Tamil areas in order to accept them and protect them in brotherhood respecting and assisting to nurture their language and culture,
- Eighthly* - immediate investigations have to be made into violations or denials of Human Rights of any Community in any part of the country, politically, socially, economically, culturally, or administratively and those occurring due to the weakness of Security Services, and to rectify them with the least delay in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, and the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of Sri Lanka,
- Ninthly* - corrective steps should be taken in a manner that the Rights of innocent citizens are not threatened in

cases of individuals or groups acting outside the realms of the Law, commit any violent anti-state, anti-constitutional acts even when taking steps to stabilise Law and Peace of the Land, as such steps would lead to unify the respectability of the State Law and the Social Norm. Measures also should be taken to establish awe, or the law abiding quality in the people towards the State Law and Peace, soliciting the People's Assistance and Participation in the maintenance of the same.

*Tenthly* - the present Economic System and its Processes have to be brought under review and an Economic Philosophy and process in keeping with the National requirements and Values have to be thought out and implemented immediately,

*Eleventhly* - the Business Community should use their expertise and other facilities to remove various economic causes and obstacles of the common people and become partners of National Development in a broader and more reasonable manner to raise the living standards of rural farming and working communities,

*Twelfthly* - the party - and power - oriented political system, considered by most as the main cause of distrust, differences, sectarianism and other vicious obstacles operating in present society should be replaced by an alternate democratic system of administration within the Unitary Frame of the State of Sri Lanka capable of fostering Mutual Confidence, Friendship, Brotherhood and Peace, in which the Common People can participate to a maximum.

### **Common Recommendation**

This People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony has so far ventured to explain the true situation of our country today, the causes thereof, the necessity for the removal of those causes and the way of removing them.

To study further, the contents of this Declaration within the framework of Principles, Aims and Processes outlined, and to

make detailed proposals of the changes that should be effected in every sector of our Society and to submit recommendations and practical plans as regards methods in which these proposals may be put into effect, the participants have decided to appoint at this Conference,

12 committees to investigate into and report on the following:

1. How may the Venerable members of the Maha Sangha and the lay leaders act to protect the life-style of Buddhists in order that it would conform to Buddhist ethics?
2. How can the Hindu - Buddhist spiritual and cultural affinity, a potential buttress to National Unity, be re-established?
3. a) How can the Fundamental Values of our Society be re-established as an inter-religious force through the consensus of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Islam and other religious leaders?  
b) How can the National Educational System be re-organised to rehabilitate the Teacher - Pupil relationship,  
inculcate National Values in children and promote mutual fraternal relationships?
4. What, in fact, are the Rights and Privileges enjoyed, as well as the difficulties and obstacles endured by various communities? How far are current reports correct in this respect?
5. How can the cultural aspects and the Audio, Visual, Written and other communication media be structured and maintained in order to build a national identity and portray a better Sri Lanka image?
6. How can the protection and social integration of the Indian Plantation Communities be ensured?
7. a) How can the acceptance, protection and integration with the Sri Lankan community, of the Tamil families and other communities living in majority Sinhala areas be promoted?  
b) How can the acceptance, protection and integration with the Tamil community, of the Sinhala families and other

communities living in majority Tamil areas be promoted?

8. What Human Rights have been violated anywhere in the country and what measures should be taken to rectify them?
9. a) How can the Law - enforcing authorities be made aware of the need for correct public relations and greater mental strength and morale in their own selves in the performance of their duties?  
b) How can the people's Participation be obtained in re-establishing the respect for the Law of the Land and for Peace?
1. What actions should be taken towards the re-evaluation of the present Economic System and Economic Processes and the evolution of a system of Economic Development in keeping with National Needs and Values?
11. In which manner should business communities come forward to supply more satisfactory expertise and facilities to promote social and economic development through Integrated Community Development Activities, resulting in the reduction of economic disparities and the preservation of National Unity and Harmony?
12. What are the processes of promoting a more advanced Democratic System of Administration, capable of eradicating distrust, differences, sectarianism and other vicious obstacles to social development prevalent at present? How can such a system mobilise the maximum People's Participation?

We have recommended at this Conference that the Chairmen and the Organisers of these Committees should amalgamate with the Executive Council of the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya and act as the National Council for the Follow-up of the People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony.

### **Determination**

We are deeply conscious and our minds are clear about the seriousness of what we have discussed. This Conference has adopted this People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony which includes several recommendations that we have formulated. We are convinced that the People's representatives

exceeding two thousand in number who expressed their views and put forward suggestions in the formulation of this declaration were motivated by nothing but pure and noble thoughts. We are firm in the determination that the problems we face today should be solved, on the basis of our traditional and timeless principles of Loving Kindness, Compassionate Action, Altruistic Joy, Equanimity, Giving and Sharing, Pleasant Speech, Constructive Activity and Equality alone. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya with the blessings and participation of other organisations, the general Public and all virtuous people will embark on a Peace Walk, aimed at evoking over the whole nation sacred emotions and thought forces that emanate from the contents of this Declaration.

We believe in the strength of the Spiritual Force that would be released from the minds of the thousands that would participate in this Peace Walk, and we are confident that the Government of Sri Lanka and all political parties as well as those groups attempting to solve the persisting problems of the day through extra-parliamentary procedures and by violence as well as by non-violence, will all bestow their blessings and render their support to this noble venture.

Finally there exists the possibility of the supreme qualities of Excellence, Humanism and Humanitarianism of the total Sri Lankan Community emerging and burgeoning as a formidable force of Righteousness for the very moment that this Declaration is adopted. This force will ever grow and mature to usher in an era of prosperity to the entire nation marked by the noble qualities of Unity, Harmony and Co-existence. Wishing from our innermost hearts that this Declaration will stand as an example, an inspiration and a blessing to all peoples beset with War and Strife and consequent sense of Distrust and Despair in other countries as well, we conclude this Declaration.

## **Appendix**

### **Special Recommendation**

Having witnessed during our life-time the manner in which countries where simple, peace-loving people lived, have become international battle fields mainly owing to the disintegration

caused by political, tribal and religious differences, that brought about greater carnage than of last two World Wars, which also destroyed their cultures almost completely,

We are convinced that if the present degenerating trend evident in Sri Lanka be allowed to proceed further every possibility exists for a similar situation to befall this island too.

We emphasize therefore, the wisdom of taking immediately, the following steps:

### **Community Awakening**

1. This People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony should be trilingually published island - wide, in all newspapers and through other means of mass-communication such as Radio and Television.
2. This declaration should be read out in every home, school, religious institute, office, association, organisation and voluntary institute and discussed in depth.
3. Every political party, relegating all narrow and ambitious goals, should honestly study this declaration, keeping only Peace, Brotherhood and the Well-being of the people in mind.
4. Every Ministry, Department and Corporation should take action to give their officers an awareness of the contents of this Declaration.
5. All defence personnel in every Police Station and the Units of the Armed Forces should read, study and understand the contents of this Declaration.
6. All insittues of learning like schools and universities should encourage their pupils and students, as the case may be to conduct Researches, Discussions, Experiments and Competitions and to write essays on the contents of this Declaration.
7. Writers, Composers, Artistes, Playwrights, Poets, etc., should be enthused to be creative according to their talents on ideas embodied in this Declaration.
8. While every religious shrine should be a place where this

Declaration is explained to its patrons, the associated clergy should also organise Meditations, Sermons and Rites and Festivals on National Harmony as the theme.

### **People's Participation**

1. The Sinhala Community should fearlessly and openly take the lead to provide protection, brotherhood, relief and rehabilitation to the Tamils who are rendered helpless.
2. Tamil communities should fearlessly take steps in their areas to provide protection and brotherhood to the Sinhala families affected during the conflicts of last July and earlier, and invite them back to where they were earlier and rehabilitate them.
3. Sinhala people living in villages neighbouring Plantations where Indian Tamil communities live, should visit those Plantations under the leadership of the Buddhist monks, and provide them with protection, brotherhood, relief and rehabilitation services.
4. The Sinhala Community should take steps to invite the affected Tamil people who lived in Sinhala areas back to those areas and to provide them with protection, brotherhood, relief and rehabilitation services.
5. Tamil people living permanently in majority Sinhala areas should publicly join with the Sinhala people in a spirit of brotherhood to stabilise the unity of the Nation and the non-violent way of the people.
6. Tamil people living in the North and the East should encourage youth who are armed with weapons of destruction whatever reason may be to ground their arms and solve their problems non-violently and justly, in a spirit of comradeship with their Sinhala brethren.
7. While personnel who serve in our Police and Defence Forces should realise that to treat those living in the North and the East, stricken with fear of a well-armed and powerful though very small minority, in an unkind harmful and degrading way is a means of aggravating the problem, and that whether they be Sinhala, Tamil or any other community, the basis for the performance of their duties should be the Law of

Righteousness and the Law of the State, and that they should trust that this fact alone would help them a long way to solve problems.

8. It should also be pointed out that the officers as well as other personnel of the Police and Armed Forces are a part of the general public, serving the members of the public themselves and hence, it should be emphatically re-iterated that it is the duty of every citizen to render them co-operation and protection, irrespective of racial differences, so that they may adequately perform their duties.

### **Political Parties**

1. It is very necessary that all parties, including the one presently in power, realise that they are responsible to varying degrees for the present degeneration and confusion in our Society.
2. It is necessary that the leaders and followers of parties realise the importance of preserving the value-systems, respecting and safeguarding the Law of the Land, of the non-involvement in violent activities and of the non-defilement of the administration of justice.
3. Instead of protecting and encouraging lawless gangs which are a serious threat to the enforcement of State Law and the maintenance of Community Peace in the present Sri Lankan rural and urban sectors, all responsible political parties should immediately work out processes of giving them the correct guidance even with the help of the arm of the law to check their anti-social activities.
4. Thinking of the disunity and decadence brought about at village level by party politics, each political party, as a matter of principle, should give every support and encouragement for the emergence of impartial community leaders and development processes through voluntary organisations and Gramodaya Mandalas.
5. In solving the Sinhala - Tamil or any other problem of national importance, priority should be given to the Unitary Status of the Sri Lankan State, Peace and Co-existence of all communities, placing them above loyalties to their own political parties, and they should be far-sighted enough to

arrive at common agreements beneficial to the total community.

6. Realising the consequences of communal politics and accepting lofty principles based on human values, they should engage in political activities which ensure maximum Peoples Participation.
7. All political parties should appoint a panel of scholars to make a deep study in order to establish a National Political System which guarantees People's Participation.

### **The State**

1. A commission should be appointed with full powers vested to inquire into all cases where people lost their lives, received serious injuries and suffered destruction of property, the payment of adequate compensation, rehabilitation work etc. and to submit recommendations and to implement such recommendations. This commission should also be empowered to inquire similarly into such ethnic conflicts that took place earlier, making no reservation whether the victims be Sinhala or Tamil, and provide relief to the victims.
2. Steps should be taken towards the immediate removal of shortcomings in the implementation of the Sinhala - Tamil Language Policy, so that a person will not face any difficulty in conducting his affairs with the Government owing to the language he speaks.
3. A set of principles should be immediately promulgated to provide protection and permanent residences to Plantation workers of Indian origin, as well as others who have lost employment and live in various parts of the Island with no permanent abode, and a permanent solution should be found for those without citizenship as well.
4. Every step should be taken to ensure that when Defence Forces of the state act against those who flout the State Law and try to achieve their political ambitions by taking up arms, no harm is caused to the self-respect of the innocent public, their property or lives in any from.
5. Special educational programmes should be conducted

- to provide the Security Forces with a deep understanding of the National Values, Moral Law and the Law of the Land, and to provide them with a knowledge of Sinhala and Tamil languages.
6. People's Participation and Assistance Should be sought for, in all Administrative, Organisational and Defence activities and for this purpose, the Government should secure the service and involvement of non- governmental organisations.
  7. A more meaningful? than the one available at present should be immediately drawn-up so that those who are sentenced to imprisonment could gain proficiency in various skills, and their characters could be re-moulded for the better during the period of imprisonment.
  8. When appointing individuals to Diplomatic Service as Ambassadors, Envoys etc., the Government should, in addition to other qualifications they possess, pay attention to their knowledge of the National and Cultural History, Values and their sense of Patriotism.
  9. An immediate rehabilitation programme should be launched for the benefit of the people who live in huts and shanties in towns, particularly in the city of Colombo.
  10. A more beneficial but firm policy with regard to alcohol and narcotics should be pursued.
  11. A strict control should be exercised on the exhibition of Theft, Crime, Sex, etc., by mass media such as newspapers, books, cartoon-papers, television and the cinema.

## **Education**

1. The education of Sinhala and Tamil children should be so organised from their young days, that they could acquire proficiency in both languages.
2. All children throughout the Island should have opportunities to gain admission to any school they prefer. In addition to the education they receive in their Mother Tongue, they should be given the opportunity to study certain subjects in English, Tamil or Sinhala according to their preferences.

3. Sinhala and Tamil classical texts that are beneficial to school children should be translated into Tamil and Sinhala respectively, and published.
4. All institutes of Higher Education and Universities should be common educational institutes into which children of all races could gain admission.
5. Children studying at all educational levels should be taught to respect the principles of all religions, and spiritual experiences should be facilitated through inter- religious relationships fostered by activities such as collective meditation.
6. Children belonging to various religions and communities should be made to join together in common cultural and sports activities, so that from their young days, they would develop in their minds the feeling that they all belong to One Nation.
7. In each district and A.G.A's divisions, there should be institutions that grant education at three levels- Primary, Intermediary and Advanced - where sinhala, Tamil and English languages are taught. These institutes could be organised by the Department of Education and Private Organisations.
8. The study of Pali and Sanskrit languages should be revived.
9. Scholars of Sri Lanka should look into the feasibility of developing an Alphabet, perhaps similar to the Roman Alphabet, so that language learning could be made easier.
10. Children speaking Sinhala should spend one term in the homes of students speaking Tamil in the Tamil speaking areas, and vice versa. Community Service Programmes could be promoted so that National Unity could be fostered. Principals and Teachers should take leadership in providing these.

### **Land - Residence - Occupation**

1. There should be no obstacle whatsoever for any citizen of Sri Lanka to buy land, live and practise an occupation in any locality of the Island.

2. Sinhala and Tamil leaders should provide leadership in settling Sinhala and other families in areas where the majority are Tamils, on the acceptance of an invitation by the Tamils, and settling Tamil and other families in areas where the Sinhalas are in a majority, on the acceptance of an invitation by the Sinhalas.
3. Agricultural Centres and Industrial Units and such other self employment generating centres should be organised on State Land for young men and women selected according to ethnic population ratios. These centres should have residential facilities, and have in them as leaders, individuals who are trained in promoting racial harmony.

*May rains shower in due season  
And render the fields fertile  
May every heart be fully contented  
The state be just and the world benefit!*

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## PEACE WALK TO EVOKE HUMANITY

Sri Lanka has reached a dangerous crisis point in its history. Our internal dissensions have led to shameful orgy of self-destruction. Internationally too we may become the prey of world power politics. The deeper cause, however, of these is the breakdown of the moral and cultural values among our peoples. We have been fast losing the concern for truth, non-violence, justice, sharing and the respect for each other. Even human life has become cheap and expendable.

To meet this grave threat to our entire way of life we need to return to the basic inspirations of our moral and religious values. We must learn once again to respect each person as a human being whatever be his or her religion, race or social standing. The different people in our country must be able to live with self-respect and dignity with a sense of security and in harmony with all others. The rights and obligations of all have to be harmonised through human understanding and political institutions which respect such human rights.

We are convinced that our people are fundamentally in favour of peace with justice, and of reconciliation through mutual understanding. This genuine goodness of the people has been presently submerged by the divisive forces of collective group selfishness leading to violence and retaliatory counter-violence. We wish to do what we can to evoke this deeper humaneness of the people and provide an opportunity for it to be expressed in an explicit and healing manner.

For this purpose we are organising a Peace Walk from Kataragama in the South to Point Pedro in the North, passing through Galle, Colombo, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Jaffna, as a Peace Walk was one of the recommendations that was included in the People's Declaration for Peace and Harmony that was

adopted at a National Conference held at the B.M.I.C.H. on 1st and 2nd of October 1983.

The aim of the Peace Walk is to help generate good - will towards all. It is based on the belief that non-violence can be the path to peace with justice. During the Walk we will endeavour to combine the spiritual resources of all our cultures and religions to strengthen the understanding and will to peace among all. It will not deal with political issues or solutions. We believe however that the generation of the spirit of understanding and righteousness is indispensable for the success of any political solution.

We wish to help generate that common consciousness of righteousness that will build Dharma Shakthiya (**The Power of Righteousness**). This in turn will be the source of the people's moral strength to resolve these issues (**Jana Shakthiya**). It is on the basis of such a Dharma Shakthiya and Jana Shakthiya that the power of the political authority (**Rajya Shakthiya**) can find meaningful solutions that are just and acceptable to all.

We have not undertaken this Peace Walk for or against any person or group. This is a pilgrimage we go from one human heart to another human heart. We have no enemies. We believe that every human being Sinhala or Tamil, Moor, Malay, Burgher or any other, all have in common a potential divinity. We want to evoke this humanity in others while we are trying to do so within ourselves. Basically the Peace Walk will help the participants to try to overcome whatever evils there are in us and bring out the goodness that is in every human being. We hope to help others in the same way. We are conscious of the limits of such an endeavour, but we believe also in its tremendous potential for good at this particular juncture in our history.

We believe people are always inherently on the side of truth and non-violence. That is the essence of being a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Christian, an Islamic or a humanist.

All these cultures have an essential goodness. Without destroying any one of them we can invoke the values in all of

them to rebuild once again a noble and great Sri Lankan nation. We accept our common humanity as the first requisite and the primary focus of our loyalty through which our own distinctive cultures and religions are fulfilled.

During the 100 days of the Peace Walk, which will cover over 1000 miles as we will be passing through populated areas, we shall endeavour to listen to people in different parts of our country and share with them our insights. We shall also try to work out practical means of participation of persons of the age groups and places by simple means such as music, art, tree planting, essay writing, meditation, dialogues based on righteousness, love, tolerance and humanity.

*May rains shower in due season*

*And render the fields fertile*

*May every heart be fully contented*

*The state be just and the world benefit!*

## AFTERWORD

Almost every philosophy that has appeared in human history is the result of some form of reflection and investigation on the part of human beings. Even those ideas presented as the result of revelation are, in the ultimate analysis, human reflections and investigations, for even if such revelations are to be accepted as being veridical, one can hardly doubt that the person to whom it is revealed is involved in reflection and investigation at least as far as the content of such revelation is concerned.

Sometimes reflection and investigation are conducted for the purpose of discovering physical and biological laws, the understanding of which is considered to be essential for improving the conditions of human life on this planet. Sometimes they are directed at discovering moral and spiritual ultimates which are contrasted with physical and material realities and which are presented as a basis for a superior and more exalted form of life. However, there is little doubt that in either case reflection and investigation are prompted by a deep sense of insecurity and uncertainty faced by the human race placed in the midst of a variety of hazards of existence.

Hazards of existence are of two types. Some are natural. Others are the products of human dispositions. Impermanence, decay and death are natural hazards of existence. From the dawn of human civilization attempts have been made to overcome such hazards. The search for security from these natural hazards of existence has unfortunately driven man to another extreme way of thinking and living thereby producing further and greater hazards of existence such as poverty, deprivation, pollution, discrimination, conflict, terrorism and war.

In the final analysis, the man-made hazards can be traced back to human reflection and investigation. *Unbridled reflection*, prompted by a sense of insecurity, involves human beings in speculations regarding the past. Even where experience fails reflections continue, providing a rich harvest of metaphysical speculations either regarding the origin of the universe or in relation to the ultimate reality of the individual. Speculations

regarding the origin of the universe have produced creationist and evolutionist theories competing for popular acceptance. Speculation relating to the individual has given rise to conceptions regarding purity of race, etc. Pedigree becomes an important consideration, as in the case of horses, dogs and cats, giving rise to distinctions based upon caste, colour, etc.

*Unbridled investigations* have ushered in the scientific and technological revolution, the backbone of the so-called affluent society. The satisfaction of the desires of this affluent society has led to a gradual depletion of natural resources. Continued investigations into the nature of physical phenomena have produced the atom bomb, a nuclear arsenal, and is about to produce "star wars" weapons system. Similarly *unbridled investigations* in the area of moral life have engendered absolutist moral laws.

Thus, reflection and investigation which are the most important means by which human beings could gain knowledge and understanding in order to overcome the hazards of existence have turned out to be the very means by which they could destroy themselves. How reflection and investigation carried beyond their legitimate boundaries could lead to subtle theories of substance, of ultimate reality or about hidden mysteries and how these theories provide a foundation for aggressive and possessive individualism has gone unnoticed. A major part of the Western philosophical tradition is rightly described as "one comprehensive commentary on Plato," gigantic substantialist tradition revolving around concepts of substance, God, soul, matter, energy, essence, etc. This substantialism is embedded not only in the general discipline of philosophy, but also in its applications. Political scientists, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, linguists as well as psychologists are all attempting to reach the "rock-bottom" looking for the ultimate and absolute structures. They do not feel secure until that "rock-bottom" is reached. They have a feeling of security and certainty. This sense of security and certainty makes them blind to the changes taking place within themselves, in the environment as well as the way in which they perceive and conceive of that environment. Conceptions based upon limited experience are

presented as absolute truths. Ideological conflicts far worse than even nuclear warfare are dotting the horizon.

A message presented to the world more than 2,500 years ago by Siddhartha Gautama or the Buddha dealt with this problem of reflection (*vitakka*) and investigation (*vicara*). He clearly perceived that unrestrained reflection and investigation tend to by-pass the empirically given, the concrete and reach out for the mystery, the unseen "beauty queen" (*janapada-kalyani*), producing metaphysical theories relating to self (*atmar*) and substance (*svabhava*) god (*isvara*) and matter (*dravya*), etc.

Abandoning such unrestrained reflections and investigations, the Buddha confined himself to what is empirically given. Anchoring ideas and conceptions on concrete experience he prevented them from soaring into heights of absolutism. The experience of the "dependently arisen phenomena" (*paticcasamuppanna*) provide him with a foundation for the conception of "dependent arising" (*paticcasamuppada*). Here he left no room for independent existence, for a substance, an essence or a mysterious entity.

Focussing on the "dependently arisen" he highlighted the "consequence", the "result," "effect". He measured truth or reality in terms of consequence, the usefulness, the *pragma*. For him, truth is what is useful (*atthasamhita*). However, in deciding what is useful no other consideration is more relevant than the happiness of human beings - oneself as well as others. Humanism, not possessive individualism or absolute self-negation, is the foundation of the Buddha's pragmatism. It is, indeed, moral pragmatism.

This moral pragmatism has been the fabric of Buddhist culture and civilization wherever it got established. "Careful scrutiny" or "consideration" (*upekkha*) made possible by the appeasement of reflection and investigation (*vitakka-vicara vupasama*) enabled the Buddhists to confine their knowledge and understanding to what is relevant to human life and cultivate and nurture a life of "friendliness" (*metta*), "compassion" (*karuna*) and "joyfulness" (*mudita*) even while living amidst the natural hazards of existence such as

impermanence (*anicca*) change (*viparinama*), decay (*jara*) and death (*marana*). The appeasement of reflection and investigation also enabled them to eliminate the man-made hazards and live in amity and concord.

And extremely sophisticated non-substantialist and non-absolutist philosophy, unknown in any part of the world except in Confucian China, was the basis of this simple yet noble life (*brahmavihara*) characterised by friendliness, compassion, joyfulness and equanimity. Generation after generation the followers of the Buddha have practised this noble life having come to learn about it from their parents and religious teachers. The sophisticated philosophy was not their concern. What mattered was harmony and happiness these moral principles generated.

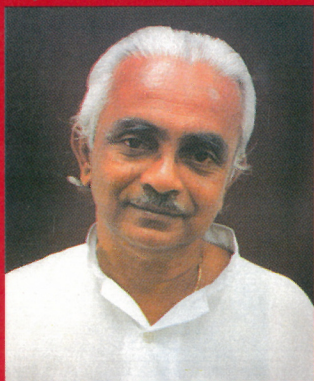
Reading through the preceding series of public lectures by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, the founder and leader of the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, one can clearly perceive the reflexion of a personality nurtured by devout Buddhist parents and instructed by the Buddhist monk who provided instruction on the *dhamma* at the Sunday school. Ariyaratne did not devote his life to the reading of the Buddhist texts in their original languages. He did not undertake research in the field of Buddhist thought and history. Yet, a sincere attempt to understand the moral principles taught him by his parents and teachers could not lead him anywhere except toward that non-substantialist and non-absolutist philosophy of the Buddha. Ariyaratne's reflections and investigations do not represent a development or an unfolding. It is the result of an attempt to understand the meaning and significance of the four forms of the noble life (*brahmavihara*) placed not in a mysterious heaven or another world but in the context of ordinary human life, social, economic as well as political. It is an attempt to reach out for the message of the Buddha for whom human life more than ideology, human happiness more than ultimate reality, were of primary concern. Ariyaratne's training in the Western scientific tradition has not blinded him to the human predicament. Certain Sri Lankan philosophers, sociologists, economists, anthropologists and political scientists born and nurtured in the same Buddhist

tradition and whose sense of insecurity seems to be so great and enormous have not only been unfairly critical of the Sarvodaya but also are offering daily worship with shameless abandon at the altar of substantialism and absolutism. Ariyaratne's lectures are expressions of ideas that have worked in the context of rural Sri Lanka to bring harmony and happiness among people who have been ravaged by Western imperialism as well as its contemporary childish followers. Presenting them in the form of Collected Works, even if this had no precedence in Sri Lanka, would be a great step toward disseminating the non-substantialist teachings of the Buddha and its practicability in a world torn asunder by conflicting absolutist ideologies.

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Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne is the Founder/Leader of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka. Four decades ago, he worked in a rural village and together with the people, developed a philosophy and a Movement which is known as Sarvodaya. In it, the awakening of everyone is symbolised. Today it has spread into many parts of Sri

Lanka and to some parts of the world too.

Ariyaratne was inspired by Vinobha Bhawe and Mahatma Gandhi. Buddhistic experiences in Sri Lanka were added to this inspiration. Today the Movement works for everyone, regardless of race, creed, caste or colour. It is a unique philosophy based on potential greatness of human beings.

In these seven volumes what Ariyaratne wrote during the last four decades are collected. The beginning of Sarvodaya and its gradual development are reflected here. As Ariyaratne travelled around the world the influences he encountered and how he looked at such influences are seen in these volumes. The essays are refreshingly original and they contain what man should do in order to establish peace within himself and with the world. Ariyaratne's essays are a tribute to his spiritual explorations into himself and into the world.

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